

RPECnews

The newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center

April—May—June, 2016



Ram Bhagat (center) with teens at a recent event.

RPEC's Peacemaker of the Year

Drummer for Reconciliation

A longtime educator, activist, and creative force, Ram Bhagat has been teaching and transforming communities for 30 years. In recognition of that service, he is honored as the Peace Center's Peacemaker of the Year for 2016.

In the late 1990s, Ram co-founded Drums No Guns, a world percussion ensemble that inspires people of all backgrounds to challenge gun violence. "The drum lifts us," he says. "The drum connects us; the drum is a powerful force; I use the drum to unite people of all ages, of all races." He was the catalyst for the founding of the Richmond Youth Peace Project in 2004 following the murders of two local high school students. The Richmond Youth Peace Project, a collaboration between the Richmond Peace Education Center and Drums No Guns, encourages young people to learn nonviolent conflict resolution techniques, and express themselves creatively, to reduce the level of violence in central Virginia. Over the years the Richmond Youth Peace Project has empowered hundreds of teens to become leaders for peace and community change.

Ram participated in the first international Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) training in Burundi,

Continued on Page 3

'Getting to The Next System'

A New Political Economy To Renew America's Promise

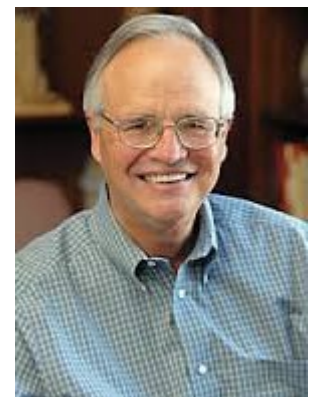
By John Gallini

Most folks involved in the peace and justice movement find it quite enough to focus on two or three issue areas. I, for example, have concentrated on projects related to international peace, ecology, and Haiti. The issues themselves seem overwhelming at times, but we continue to work at some part of the problem, hoping to make a small difference.

Another approach is to look at our economic and political system as a whole and ask if we need to change the system in order to make significant progress on these issues.

That is the approach of "The Next System Project," co-chaired by Gar Alperovitz and James Gustave (Gus) Speth. Gus has written a 40-page essay describing the project, published on their website: thenextsystem.org. Gus writes:

"How can we address problems that sometimes seem unsolvable? How to lift families mired in generations of poverty to a better life? Stop the flow of carbon into our atmosphere? Or remove corporate influence from our politics? These are problems so large some are resigned to enduring, rather than confronting, them. But surely that is not the best course. . . . Our largest problems—from climate change to inequality and poverty—are deeply rooted in the fundamentals of our political-economic system. Working within that system to achieve incremental changes will never be enough. The current system is simply not programmed to secure the well-being of people, place, and planet.



Gus Speth

Continued on Page 5

RPECnews

is a publication of the
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RPECnews is published four times per
year and has a circulation of
approximately 1,800. We welcome
article and calendar submissions.

Reflection

Adria Scharf
RPEC Executive Director

Misplaced Priorities

My daughter's school and four other Richmond public schools were threatened with closure last month to save \$3 million.

I oppose the proposed closures, and like every other parent and teacher in the system, I want to see our schools better funded. But I keep thinking about the larger view. Richmond's annual budget battle is the predictable result of misplaced priorities at the state and national levels.

We've come to accept the unacceptable. Our city, a city with a 40-percent child poverty rate, receives far too little help from the state and federal governments. We're told that's just "the way it is." But it doesn't have to be.

Tax Time is the perfect time to stop and reflect about our priorities, including the troubling fact that more than half of the federal discretionary budget (54 percent) goes to war and defense. By contrast just 6 percent goes to education. Far too many of our tax dollars go to war and the DOD, and comparatively few go to education and other investments in a sane future..

More school funding comes from the state, but that support has fallen. "State direct aid to Richmond City public schools was \$1,291 per pupil lower in 2016 than it was in 2009," according to The Commonwealth Institute, a drop of more than 17 percent. "If the General Assembly had decided to give Richmond the same per-pupil, inflation-adjusted aid in 2017 that it gave in 2009, Richmond Public Schools would have an additional \$25.2 million."

Compounding the overall drop in state funding is the fact that the formula Virginia uses to allocate education funds to its localities shamefully disadvantages Richmond. The "composite index of local ability to pay" or "LCI," isn't based on the poverty level of a school district, or the actual need of the students who attend public schools in a given locality. Instead, the formula is heavily based on the value of property in that locality.

No matter that RPS ranks 2nd in the state in percentage of students in poverty. Because we have Windsor Farms, high-rise buildings, and other high value real estate in the city (and other factors), the LCI considers Richmond relatively well "able to pay" for its own education costs. Strangely, according to the LCI, Henrico County is less "able to pay" than the city so it qualifies for proportionately more LCI school funding than Richmond does.

Richmond children without question need and deserve more resources. I'll continue to join in advocating for every penny. But it's not sufficient to aim fire at the local leaders of our economically strapped city without at the same time recognizing the larger decline in support and misappropriation of resources from higher levels of government.

A larger change is overdue.

Peacemaker

Continued from Page 1

East Africa, together with Peace Center staff member Santa Sorenson. HROC is a healing and reconciliation program that facilitates healing from trauma caused by violence, war and genocide. Under Richmond Peace Education Center auspices, Ram, Santa and other skilled facilitators have helped many trauma-affected community members begin to heal.

Today Ram serves as President of The Conciliation Project, a theater organization that promotes open and honest dialogue about racism and oppression in America. He also supports Girls For A Change. His deep commitment to the prevention of gun violence, and to the social emotional health of African American and Latino adolescents, is rooted in the tragic gun death of his younger brother.

In a recent TEDxRVA talk, Ram quoted the great educator Paolo Friere: “The community must be uplifted by the victims of trauma, the oppressed, who must not become perpetrators, but who, through a process of self-healing, uplift the community.”

Ram retired in 2015 from Open High School, where he chaired the science department. He is now Science Department Chair at Ballou High School in Washington, D.C. .

Membership Dinner Is Booked Solid

The Peace Center's Member Appreciation Dinner on Thursday, May 26, is already filled, and a wait list has been started. To be placed on the wait list, email rpec@rpec.org. The dinner will be at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church, starting at 5:30 p.m. .

Weekend Workshops For Youth CR Trainers

RPEC has scheduled two weekend workshops to train the next group of Richmond Youth Peace Project (RYPP) conflict resolution leaders. The trainings are open to rising 8th graders and older students..

Trainings will be offered on September 24-25 and October 15-16, at the Fan Free Clinic, 1010 N. Thompson St. from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. The workshops are FREE and we provide lunch and snacks.

Students who complete the 15-hour training will be eligible to become members of the RYPP leadership team able to present workshops to other young people under mentorship of RPEC's adult facilitators.

Interested teens can apply by email-rypp@rpec.org for information.

350 Student Writers Enter Essay Contest

Judging for the 2016 Peace Essay is complete, thanks to more than 25 dedicated volunteer judges who evaluated 350 entries. Winners are listed on the RPEC website and on Page 9 of this newsletter.

The theme for this year's contest was “Learning Peacemaking from Nature.” The prompt asked students to find instances of plants and animals living together cooperatively, and consider what peacemaking lessons humans might learn from the natural world.

The contest was open to all students in Virginia, divided into four grade divisions: K-2, 3-5, middle, and high school. Teachers were encouraged to use the contest's writing prompt as a teaching tool.

‘Peace Summit’ Inspires 130 Teens

About 130 teens from all over Central Virginia attended this year's Youth Peace Summit on April 30. We opened the day with a fun ice breaker, followed by a viewing of the film about racial barriers to success, “Structural Discrimination: The Unequal Opportunity Race.” Led by Peace Center trainer Shivaughn Ferguson and our Richmond Youth Peace Project and Armstrong Leadership Program leaders, participants discussed the video and the issues it raised in small groups.

We wanted to show the video, which has been discouraged from use in Henrico County public schools, to show that the film can be a useful tool. . .and that it is possible, and indeed critically important, to talk with teens about race and white privilege. Indeed, our teen peace leaders accomplished what adults in Henrico had difficulty with. They led their peers in healthy and safe discussions about a challenging video about race in America, allowing all voices to be heard.

Engaging workshops, many led by our community partners, included. Keep the Peace Conflict Resolution; Healing the Community with Rhythm with Drums No Guns; Challenging the School to Prison Pipeline with the Legal Aid Justice Center; addressing privilege with HOME; Dance Expression with VCU's Black Arts Student Empowerment (B.A.S.E); Know Your Rights with the ACLU of Virginia; Shockoe Bottom History with Ana Edwards; Coping with stress with the National Alliance on Mental Illness Virginia; Anger Management; Healthy Relationships; Sudanese Cooking, and Understanding Islam.

After lunch, a Youth Activism Award was presented to Hermitage High School student Jordan Chapman, who launched the successful effort to change the name of Byrd Middle School.

Among feedback from the teens on what they learned were these comments:

—*It is good to look at both sides of the argument.*

—*I learned: watch what you text to other people.*

—*I learned how to express my feelings through drumming and dancing. . .*

RPEC Happenings

Reclaiming Our Democracy From Militarism

A Forum Sponsored by RPEC and ACLU

The Richmond Peace Education Center and the ACLU of Virginia are organizing a major regional forum to be held in Richmond in September 17, as a commemoration of the 15th anniversary of 9/11. This forum is a component of the Peace Center's Alternatives to Militarism Project (AMP), which seeks to challenge the growing militarization of U.S. society since 9/11.

The global war on terror, excessive Pentagon spending, militarization of police, and erosions of civil liberties have made us less safe, less free, and poorer. A reassessment is overdue.

"Reclaiming Our Democracy after 9/11" will include a plenary session on What We Have Lost in terms of civil and constitutional rights, why it matters, and what can be done about it. This will be followed by four workshops, on topics including:

- * Militarization of the police.
- * Loss of privacy and growth of the surveillance state.
- * Decline of diplomacy and growth of endless war.
- * Color of terror and the psychology of hate.

We will end the day with a strategy session for further organizing.

Our hope and intention is that attendees of the Forum will form the kernel for a reinvigorated citizens movement to contribute in multiple ways to a re-set of the trajectory our country has been on for the last 15 years of an endless "war on terror" and the erosion of the democratic foundations and liberal values that once made the United States a beacon of hope for many.

Expected speakers include:

— Dr. Heidi Beirich; Director of the Intelligence Project at the Southern Poverty Law Center.

— Kade Crockford; Director of the Technology for Liberty Project at the ACLU of Massachusetts.

— Kate Gould; Legislative Representative for Middle East Policy, Friends Committee for National Legislation.

— Jack Gravely; Interim Executive Director at the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP.

— Talat Hamdani; a Pakistani-American advocate who lost her son on 9/11, and a member of September 11 Families for a Peaceful Tomorrow.

— Dr. Wornie Reed; Professor of Sociology and African American Studies and Director of the Race and Social Policy Center at Virginia Tech University.

— Dr. Lisa Schirch; North American Research Director, Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research.

— Hina Shamsi; Director of ACLU's National Security Project.

— Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson; Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Government and Public Policy at the College of William and Mary.

— Mona Siddiqui; a leader in the Richmond Muslim community.

— Larry Syverson; a Richmond father of three sons who have served multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan; member of Military Families Speak Out.

Save the date — September 17. Registration will open in early summer.

Summer CR Training For Adults, Educators

Register for the Richmond Peace Education Center's two-day training in conflict resolution! This training is the foundation for all of our conflict resolution programs and provides essential skills and insights to adults of all experience levels.

The training will be Tuesday and Wednesday, July 12-13, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both days, at the Fan Free Clinic, 1010 North

Thompson Street, Richmond.

This two-day training includes many engaging exercises to strengthen communication, listening, and conflict problem-solving skills. The skills learned are applicable for interpersonal disputes at home or work, as well as for use with students in a classroom or informal education setting.

Successful completion of the two-day training is a first step for those interested in becoming certified RPEC conflict resolution trainers.

Educators taking the training will earn a minimum of 15 points toward recertification of their Virginia teaching certificate.

Tuition, which must be prepaid, is \$175, which includes the cost of a 200+ page manual. Partial scholarship are available on request. To register, Email your name, address and phone number to rpec@rpec.org. Please mail payment in advance to RPEC, 3500 Patterson Avenue, Richmond, VA 23221 with T4T in the memo line.

The Next System

Continued from Page 1

Explaining why system change is imperative, Gus points out features of American capitalism and society that are unsustainable and make change necessary, such as the overriding drive for corporate profit at the expense of the environment and the workers. Other features include:

- * the prioritization of economic growth above all else,
- * the profit motive's effect on corporate behavior,
- * the size and power of modern corporations,
- * a value system that is strongly materialistic and anthropocentric,
- * a government that is driven by growth, hobbled by partisanship, corrupted by money, and typically at the service of powerful economic interests, and
- * a financial system controlled by Wall Street and the big banks.

Gus then describes how the system will look once the necessary changes have been implemented.:

The market: from near laissez-faire to powerful market governance and planning in the public interest; from

dishonest prices to honest ones, and from unfair wages to fair ones; from commodification to reclaiming the commons, the things that rightfully belong to all of us.

The corporation: from shareholder primacy to stakeholder primacy; from one ownership and profit-driven model to new business models based on public scrutiny of major investment decisions, motivations other than profit, and economic democracy, including more democratic forms of ownership and control.

Economic growth: from growth fetish to post-growth society; from mere GDP growth to growth in social and environmental well-being.

Money and finance: from Wall Street to Main Street; from money created through bank debt to money created by government; from investments seeking high financial return to those seeking social and environmental returns.

Social conditions: from economic insecurity to security; from vast inequities to fundamental fairness; from racial and other discrimination to just treatment of all.

Indicators: from GDP ("grossly distorted picture") to accurate measures of social and environmental health and quality of life.

Continued on Page 6

System 'Insider' Opts for Change

"Am I a 'Radical'?" queried the headline in a recent issue of *The Nation* magazine, over an article by James Gustave (Gus) Speth. His answer: "We can no longer hope to address the climate crisis, or our deep social ills, by working strictly within the system. We must change the system itself."

Speth reached this decision after 40 years of working in the "system," at every available level.

As a fledgling lawyer, fresh out of Yale Law School, Speth and some classmates founded an environmental law firm, which blossomed as the Natural Resources Defense Council.

After seven years with NRDC, Speth joined the Carter Administration as chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The Council's efforts to create a na-

tional policy on climate change came to nought when President Carter was defeated by Ronald Reagan in the 1980 election. The Council's report, issued in the final days of the Carter Administration, warned that continued use of fossil fuel would gravely endanger the environment.

Three decades later, in a memoir, "Angels by the River," Speth lamented the nation's failure to act on climate change. "The end result is beyond pathetic," he wrote. "It is probably the greatest dereliction of civic responsibility in the history of the Republic."

Speth then went global, founding the World Resources Council, which helped put climate change on the

world agenda, leading to the 1992 Earth Summit and a multinational agreement that the U.S. ratified.

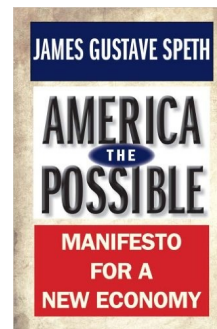
Speth's next post was administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. "My visits to our program offices took me to the world's poorest and most dangerous places. . . The obscene disparities in economic and social conditions that we see both at home and abroad are the measure of the obligation that many of us share to be a force for change."

Speth's next returned to Yale as dean of its environment and forestry school.

From Yale, he moved to the Vermont Law School, where he is professor of environmental law.

He has developed his ideas in many books, such as "America the Possible," published by Yale Press.

By Charles Robideau



The Next System

Continued from Page 5

Consumerism: from consumerism and “affluenza” to sufficiency and mindful consumption; more to enough.

Communities: from runaway enterprise and throwaway communities to vital local economies; from social rootlessness to rootedness and solidarity.

Dominant cultural values: from having to being; from getting to giving; from richer to better; from separate to connected; from apart from nature to part of nature; from near-term to long-term.

Politics: from weak democracy to strong, from creeping corporatocracy and plutocracy to true popular sovereignty and the ascendancy of people power over money power.

Foreign policy and the military: from American exceptionalism to America as a normal nation; from hard power to soft; from military might to real security.

Gus argues that the system change envisioned must be international in scope, and he offers a checklist of questions that could be asked of any new proposal. Examples include:

- * Does the initiative move an ever-larger share of the economy away from the profit motive?
- * Does the initiative increase wealth among the many rather than accumulating it among the few?
- * Does the initiative recognize rights of species other than humans and so transcend anthropocentrism?

In conclusion, Gus offers a scenario depicting how the New System might, eventually come to be:

“So imagine: As conditions in our country continue to decline across a wide front, or at best fester as they are, ever-larger numbers of Americans lose faith in the current system and its ability to deliver on the values it proclaims. The system steadily loses support, leading to a crisis of legitimacy. Meanwhile, traditional crises, both in the economy and in the environment, grow more numerous and fearsome. In response, progressives of all stripes coalesce, and their voice and their strength, and pioneer the development of a powerful set of new ideas, institutional changes, and policy proposals confirming that the path to a better world does indeed exist. Demonstrations and protests multiply, and a powerful movement for pro-democracy reform and transformative change is born. At the local level, people and groups plant the seeds of change through a host of innovative initiatives that provide inspirational models of how things might work in a new political economy devoted to sustaining human and natural communities. Sensing the direction in which things are moving, our wiser and more responsible leaders, political and otherwise, rise to the occasion, support the growing movement for change, and frame a compelling story or narrative that makes sense of it all and provides a positive vision of a better America. . . . It is a moment of democratic possibility.”

The Next System Project was launched on March 15, 2015. In its first year, it has:

- *Attracted an impressive list of partners and signatories to their statement and the project.*
- *Held two convening conferences to initiate a process of teach-ins. The teach-ins began in April in New York City and California and will continue nationwide.*
- *Begun assembling options to the current system.*

This is a project that should be reflected upon and that deserves our support. See <http://thenextsystem.org/>

Environment Is Threatened by Many Human Actions and Conditions

For the Next System Project, a major challenge is to address the immediate threat of climate change while working for the “Next System” of the future. Gus Speth emphasizes that both efforts must coincide.

“We need to pursue major policy reforms within the system, and we need to pursue equally powerful efforts to change the system itself in fundamental ways.”

In his latest book, “Angels by the River,” Gus notes that the environment is affected by many human actions as well as social and political conditions. :

“What is an environmental issue? Air and water pollution, yes. But what if the right answer is that an envi-

ronmental issue is anything that determines environmental outcomes? Then, surely, the ascendancy of money power and corporate power over people power — these are environmental issues. And more: the chartering and empowering of artificial persons to do virtually anything in the name of profit and growth. . . . the fetish of GDP growth as the ultimate public good and the main aim of government; our runaway consumerism; our vast social insecurity with half the families living paycheck to paycheck.

“These are environmental concerns, but they rarely appear on the agendas of our main national environmental groups.”

Alperovitz Looks Beyond Capitalism

Gar Alperovitz, the co-founder of the The Next System Project, was for 15 years a professor of political economy at the University of Maryland and is a prolific writer and commentator for national press and media. He has testified before numerous Congressional committees, served as legislative director in both houses of Congress and as a special assistant in the State Department. He has written books on the atomic bomb and atomic diplomacy, as well as the recent titles, “America Beyond Capitalism” and “What Must We Do? – Straight Talk About the Next American Revolution.”



Gar Alperovitz

In 2000, Gar co-founded the Democracy Collaborative at the University of Maryland as a research center dedicated to the pursuit of democratic renewal, increased civic participation and community revitalization.

Gar will be leading the Next System’s teach-in program, which began in April with events in New York and California.

“Teach-ins as a strategy have been part and parcel of progressive change for more than five decades,” said Gar, recalling teach-ins for causes ranging from the Vietnam War to Occupy Wall Street to climate justice to Black Lives Matter.

“What kind of system might one day transcend the traditional 20th century models of corporate capitalism on one hand and state socialism on the other? How do we engage the question, both practically and theoretically? These questions at the heart of the teach-ins matter to all of us, but are particularly urgent to those born after the 1960’s.”

Environmentalists Go to Jail to Stop Tar Sands Oil Pipeline

During one steamy August weekend in 2011, Gus Speth and Bill McKibben, the environmental activist and writer, kept each other company as cellmates in the Washington, D.C. jail, having been arrested in a sit-down demonstration at the White House, opposing the proposed Keystone XL (“Tar Sands”) pipeline from Canada to Texas. Over the course of the two-week demonstration, 1,252 were arrested.

The protests helped to stall the pipeline project, but they have not ended oil companies’ hopes of exploiting the Tar Sands oil sources.

Speth, who once worked in the White House as chair of President Carter’s Council on Environmental Quality, issued a statement from the jail through his wife, Cameron:

“We the prisoners being held in the Central Cell Block of the D.C. jail need company and encourage the continuation of the protests against the Tar Sands pipeline. Help us stop this disastrous proposal! I’ve held numerous positions and public office



Gus Speth talks at a rally at the White House (right) and later is escorted to jail (left).

in Washington, but my current position feels like one of the most important.”

That White House action was a taste of what Speth sees in the future:

“Achieving meaningful changes will require a rebirth of marches, protests, demonstrations, direct action, and nonviolent civil disobedience,” Gus states in his latest essay.

“Author and social critic Chris Hedges reminds us that ‘civil disobedience, which will entail hardship and suffering, which will be long and difficult, which at its core means self-sacrifice, is the only mechanism left.’ Those words ring true to those who have worked for decades to elicit a

meaningful response to the threat of climate change and find, after all the effort, mostly ashes.”

In his memoir, “Angels at the River,” Gus describes many environmental victories — laws enacted, policies adopted, and organizations created. “Yet,” he laments, “a specter is haunting American environmentalism — the specter of failure. Our environmental organizations have grown in strength and sophistication, but the environment has continued to go downhill. The prospect of a ruined planet is now very real. We have won many victories, but we are losing the planet.”

—By Charles Robideau

What Is War Now?

By Gordon Davies

As a nation, we allocate over half our annual budget to defense expenditures. We tend to assume that we are engaged in a “war”: the War on Terror. For almost 15 years, since September 11, 2001, we have claimed to be engaged in a war that is unlike any other that is part of our history. There are no exits, no battles won or lost, no surrenders, just one armed conflict after another.

We have spent trillions of dollars on military actions that have resulted in death and injury for thousand of American military personnel, and trauma for many of those who survived. We have caused widespread death and displacement of persons in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan, Libya, and numerous other countries throughout Africa and the Middle East. Now we are deeply engaged in the Syrian conflict, where there are so many factions that it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand who is an ally and who is a foe.

What is war in the 21st century? It certainly is not simply a conflict between nations. Unlike World War I and World War II, even unlike the Korean and Vietnam wars, the military does not fight for control of geographic territory. Unlike the wars of the past, we cannot identify the “enemy” clearly. It is not army against army. It is relatively small groups against civilians.

Today we are engaged in conflicts with relatively small groups of people hostile to the United States and other nations. It is US vs. THEM. But who is “THEM”? They are groups that hijack airplanes and fly them into skyscrapers; a couple who kill dozens of people in San Bernadino; a group that attacks tourists and residents of Paris. They even are brothers who plant bombs at the end of the Boston Marathon. There is no way to organize a traditional military offensive on such groups – no invasion of Normandy, no battle of Midway.

We are not alone. Russia experienced a disaster in Afghanistan before 9/11. It foreshadowed our experiences in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, and other African nations. The European Nation is trying to figure out how to prevent domestic violence and cope with huge numbers of immigrants from Syria and elsewhere. Today we all are thrashing about in Syria, unable to agree about who the enemies are among the number of militant groups. How can we accommodate the millions of people who are fleeing Syria and seeking refuge in Europe and the United States? Who are our allies? Our enemies?

During all of this, we continue to spend vast amount of money on a traditional military and now on updating nuclear weapons in far greater numbers than necessary. We spend far less than we should on health and human services, education, the environment, labor, and other essential needs.

The new face of war is about winning hearts and minds, not territory. The U.S. seems to have forgotten how to do this. Instead of working with people in other parts of the world, we tend to behave like a bully on the street. We know how to throw punches but not how to make friends and allies. Violence is happening everywhere as the bi-polar world of democratic capitalism and authoritarian socialism ceases to exist. We are fighting war as if this were a world that is now vanished.

Do we have the civic, economic, diplomatic, and moral tools to fight a war of ideas as we did during the Cold War? It seems that our only ideas today are about bombing, banning, and building walls.

Where do we stop? And when do we adapt our behavior to the world in which we now live?

Peacemaking Events Not To Miss

“The House I Live In”

Film Screening and Discussion
Thursday, June 2, 6:30. p.m.
Virginia Historical Society, 428 N. Blvd.
Part of Created Equal Film Series, hosted by
VHS and RPEC

Conflict Resolution for Adults

Two-Day Training July 11-12
See www.rpec.org for details.

RVA Peace Festival

Saturday, September 10
Be an exhibitor or vendor.
Reserve your table at: rvapeace.wordpress.com

“Reclaiming Our Democracy”

RPEC and ACLU sponsored conference
exploring 9/11’s effects on U.S. society
Saturday, Sept. 17, location to be announced

2016 Peace Essay Contest Winners

Primary grades (K-2)

1st place: Riley Allam, gr. 2, Linwood Holton ES, Richmond Public Schools.

2nd place: Kayvon Kalantari, gr. 2, Mountain-top Montessori School, Charlottesville.

3rd place (tie): Brady Elrod, gr. 2, Rural Point ES, Hanover Co. Public Schools; Sarina Ravji, gr. K, Kaechele ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools; Jayla Youngblood, gr. 2, Victory Christian Acad., Richmond.

Honorable Mention: Ian Campbell, gr. 2, Rural Point ES, Hanover Co. Public Schools; Anna Conley, gr. 2, Rural Point ES, Hanover Co. Public Schools; Addyson Hoover, gr. 2, Rural Point ES, Hanover Co. Public Schools.

Elementary grades (3-5)

1st place: Samhita Vartharaj, gr. 5, Luther Memorial School, Richmond.

2nd place: Caden Grayson, gr. 3, Blandford Program for Mathematics and Humanities, Petersburg Public Schools.

3rd place: Kazuki Yoshiba, gr. 5, J. B. Watkins ES, Chesterfield Co. Public Schools.

Honorable Mention: McKenna Blue, gr. 4, Rural Point ES, Hanover Co. Public Schools; Awna Mack, gr. 5, Arthur Ashe ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools; Shriya Majuhdar, gr. 4, Twin Hickory ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools; Aryanah Ravji, gr. 5, Kaechele ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools; Ada Woo, gr. 5, Colonial Trail ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools.

Middle school grades (6-8)

1st place (tie): Georgia Burrichter, Albert Hill MS, Richmond Public Schools; Maggie McKenna, Moody MS, Henrico Co. Public Schools.

3rd place: Elijah Woodward, gr. 6, Lucille Brown MS, Richmond Public Schools.

Honorable Mention: Theresa Carpinelli, gr. 7, St. Edward-Epiphany School, Richmond; Stamate Theofanos gr. 7, Lucille Brown MS, Richmond Public Schools; Mona Tuli, gr. 8, Franklin MS, Fairfax; Amelia Seabury, gr. 8, Albert Hill MS, Richmond Public Schools; Ubdhav Muthakana, gr. 7, Stone Hill MS, Loudoun County.

High school grades (9-12)

1st place: Hannah Ballowe, gr. 9, St. Catherine's school, Richmond.

2nd place: Tahja Steward, gr. 11, Open HS, Richmond Public Schools.

3rd place (tie): Gracie Caplice, gr. 9, St. Catherine's school, Richmond; Bronwyn Mitchell, gr. 9, St. Catherine's school, Richmond.

Honorable Mention: Claire Bowes, gr. 9, St. Catherine's school, Richmond; Madeline Brousseau, gr. 11, St. Catherine's school, Richmond; Abby Craig, gr. 9, St. Catherine's school, Richmond; Grace Lu, gr. 10, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Fairfax County.