

SUMMER

*Alternatives to Violence Project Newsletter*

2006

# the TRANSFORMER



***After "WALLS TO BRIDGES"*****News From the AVP-USA 2006 National Gathering in Easton, Massachusetts***Fred Feucht & The Westchester Area Council, Purchase, NY*

On Memorial Day weekend, 18 New York AVPers joined with nearly 150 people from around the US (including Puerto Rico) to enrich our lives and learn new skills. There were three major speakers including Bo Lozoff of the Human Kindness Foundation, Robin Casarjian of Houses of Healing and David Bucura from AVP Rwanda. Some of the highlights of the weekend were:

**AVP Rwanda**

A Country's Past and Current Need for AVP  
*A Talk by David Bucura*

**David Bucura**  
**AVP Rwanda Coordinator**  
**Box 2477 Kigali -Rwanda**  
**dabucura@yahoo.fr**

Rwanda is a small country with a population of about six million. In 1996 one million people were killed in 100 days, both Hutus and Tutsis. David Bucura is a man who lost over half of his family in the genocide. In spite of his personal hurt, anger and tragedy, after the killing ended he said, "We need to talk peace, we need to talk peace this time, but we need skills." He was told to "Talk to Uganda." In Uganda he met AVP facilitators with the skills he was looking for. He brought in training in AVP training and trauma counseling.

Today there are 120,000 people in prison in Rwanda because of the genocide crimes. The justice system and the prison system are overwhelmed. To deal with this problem, Rwanda is using the traditional "Gacaca" process similar to the "Truth Commissions" in South Africa are being used. Over 1,100 lay judges have been being trained in AVP workshops. David Bucura has organized the program and 126 AVP workshops have been held including 70 for the judges. One of the judges told David, "Perhaps if we had AVP before, we wouldn't have had the genocide."

~ [ *David noted that Rwanda still needs assistance from AVP outside Rwanda. - Editor* ] ~

**The Innocence Project***A Sharing by Dennis Maher*

Two years ago, Dennis Maher spoke at the AVP conference in Minnesota. He had been released from prison only seven weeks earlier. Dennis was an AVP Facilitator in prison in Massachusetts. Because he was falsely convicted of a sexual crime, and he would never admit his guilt to the parole board, and he refused treatment as a sexual offender, he never expected to get out of prison. After 19 years in prison, he was exonerated by DNA evidence through the work of the Innocence Project.

At Stonehill College, ***a film on the Innocence Project followed up*** on the problems that were faced by the men who had been exonerated and released from jail. It has not been an easy path and many experienced great difficulties in adjusting to today's society. Dennis Maher was one of the stars of the film. He was there at the conference to tell everyone about his new life. He is married, has two small children and works as a mechanic in the sanitation department in his hometown of Lowell, Massachusetts. It was a privilege to shake his hand and wish him further success.

The weekend included dozens of mini-workshops on topics ranging from I Messages, a Womanliness Workshop, Transforming Power to Organizing Community Workshops and dealing with the Department of Corrections.

*(Continued on page 3)*

*(Continued from page 2)*

It was a great opportunity to network with AVPers from around the country including Marge Schlitt, John Shuford, Bob Barns, Ghiri Sequoya, Dottie Joos, Ann Ward, Richard Nethercutt and a multitude of others.

The members of AVP Westchester who attended included Betty and Rudy Cypser, Tom Martin, Judy Meikle, Marion Sloan, Henry Rivera, Fred Feucht, Lenora Zeitchick, Aaron McBride, Mary Kay Jou, Ray Rios and Jolene Festa.

## **We're All Doing Time**

*A conversation with Bo Lozoff*

A slim, wiry man dressed in a black T-shirt and black pants walked into the auditorium, sat down on a cushion in the half-lotus position and began to talk. It was Bo Lozoff, a former hippie, druggie, civil rights activist, student and outlaw. Today, Bo is a spiritual master and teacher who has led thousands and thousands of prison inmates on a path of inner power and transforming power.

Bo talked in a quiet but powerful voice to over 100 AVPers at Stonehill College outside Boston on May 27. Bo told us about his personal transformation and talked about the transformation of the world. In the last 30 years he has spoken to inmates in over 1,000 prisons in 60 countries about finding inner power and inner peace through meditation.

The Prison Ashram Project was started by Bo Lozoff and Ram Das in 1973. The Project is about going inside and practicing meditation. Ram Das' book, "Be Here Now," and Bo Lozoff's book, "We're All Doing Time," were offered free to any inmate who requested it. The project was even endorsed by the Dalai Lama.

At the 2006 AVP-USA Conference, Bo spoke about the prison experience and he said that with all its difficulty and pain it is a profound experience and a real opportunity for change. It is an opportunity to go inside and discover who we really are. In a situation where all our worldly things are taken away, we are left to face our inner selves. This creates a profound experience. In Bo's words we need to, "Be still and shut up."

When asked, "Have your principles and methods changes since 1973," he said, "The principles and methods have not changed but the context has changed in the last 30 years." He compared this to Germany in the 30s. In 1932 the German prisons were filled with common criminals and when they were released they were expected to conform to normal German society. However, by 1939 a German inmate was released into a society that was anything but normal. Was it right to conform to an insane Nazi society?

Today's inmates were thrown off the train of our society when they went to prison in the '70s and '80s. The train continued on. Now that they are returning to the train of our society it seems to be headed for a wreck. Bo sees that we are headed for an "intervention" as a society similar to the one in AA where the friends of an alcoholic gather to confront his behavior.

**Modern Addictions** - Bo believes that there are two modern addictions that today's inmates face upon their release:

**Rampant Consumerism** - The first message from our president after the attack on 9-11 was, "Don't stop spending! Continue your regular activities." When people feel a little sad, they don't look for the cause of the sadness; instead they go to a specialist and ask

*(See "After Walls to Bridges" on page 4)*

*(“After Walls to Bridges” - Bo Lozoff’s talk continued from page 3)*

for a product. They get a prescription for Prozac. There are more prescriptions for antidepressants in the US than in the rest of the world combined. When someone wants to stop smoking, instead of just quitting, they go to an MD and ask for an implant to help them with their habit. Stopping is “hard” but it’s not “impossible.” In this culture we don’t do “hard” without a product or a specialist.

**Over Stimulation** - Today, with cell phones, blackberries, iPods, laptops, 100 plus channels and the mall, we are on an input overload. We are all into multitasking as opposed to mindfulness. Mindfulness is focusing on one thing; the thing that is happening now; being here now.

Inmates are going out into a culture that is violent, depressed and over stimulated. We as a society need the qualities that inmates have developed in prison. We need to be in the world but not of the world.

Bo believes that we are facing a period of adversity in the next few years. Jimmy Carter is writing about “Our Endangered Freedoms” and Al Gore is making a movie about “The Ecological Crisis.”

Prison is about learning how to deal with adversity. We need their skills. Prison is a profound experience. We miss profundity in our lives.

**Nonviolence** - The Prison Ashram Project is about nonviolence. AVP is about nonviolence.

Inmates ask, “How can I be nonviolent and survive in prison? How do I deal with the prison code? If I do not respond violently to a threat I will be seen as soft and I will be victimized.”

Bo was so concerned about this issue that he wrote to the Dalai Lama about it and requested an audience. When they met, the Dalai Lama told him this story.

“There was a holy man and a cobra came to him and asked him how he could be nonviolent. The holy man told the cobra, ‘just don’t bite anyone.’ The next time the holy man saw the cobra he looked terrible and was all bedraggled and beat up. The cobra complained and said that nonviolence doesn’t work. Then the holy man told the cobra, ‘I didn’t say you couldn’t hiss.’”

The Dalai Lama also quoted Gandhi who said. “There are many things that I am willing to die for but there is nothing that I would kill for.”

Malcolm X said, “Self defense is not the same as being violent.”

In closing Bo said, “It’s OK to be a poor meditator. Everyone is poor before Christ. It’s not about results”

Meeting Bo Lozoff was a remarkable experience. It was about meeting a human being with immense humility, immense discipline, totally present in the now and in touch with immense inner power. He is a role model for millions of prison inmates and for all those who meet him.

***You may contact Bo Lozoff at the Human Kindness Foundation, PO Box 61619, Durham, NC 27715 or at <http://www.humankindness.org>***

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

## **A conversation with Robin Casarjian... Houses of Healing**

A petite, middle-aged woman weighing barely 100 pounds with a striking white streak in her jet black hair stepped onto the stage at Stonehill College. Robin Casarjian began to speak about forgiveness. She has been a corporate stress management trainer, a therapist working with people with life threatening illnesses and a teacher. She has devoted the last 18 years to turning prisons from houses of anger and violence to houses of healing. Robin is one of the leading thinkers and writers in the field of forgiveness.

When there was an assassination attempt on the pope more than twenty years ago, Time magazine did a cover article of the topic of forgiveness. In the article they said, "Forgiveness is a shrewd and practical strategy."

Robin said that one way to define forgiveness is to look at what it is not.

- Forgiveness is not condoning abuse.
- Forgiveness is not about repression.
- Forgiveness is not about forgetting.
- Forgiveness is not about self-righteousness.
- Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation.

She said that forgiveness is seldom a one-time event. When the pain comes back we need to forgive again.

Robin then asked why we hang onto resentments and why we find it so hard to forgive? Some of the secondary gains for holding onto resentment are:

- Being right
- Being a victim
- Being angry
- Being a "good" person

We need to recognize that:

"The ego is a judgment machine."

"The ego loves to take things personally."

Robin spoke about "Forgiving on Neutral Territory," and talked about personality structure using the diagram on the right. We all have a core self which is good, loving and kind. We also have free will. However, we also have sub-personalities who are not our true self. When conflict and violence occur, it is usually an interaction between one of my sub-personalities and my opponents sub-personality rather than between our core selves. In forgiveness we need to come from our core self.

We need to recognize that what we are forgiving is not the act (rape, abuse, attack, etc.) but the other person who was not in touch with his or her core self.

Forgiveness is not a feeling, it is a choice and a decision. We can use our free will to make a decision for forgiveness. Forgiveness is a shift in perception. It has been said, "Forgiveness is giving up all hope of a better past."

***You may contact Robin at The Lionheart Foundation, Box 194, Back Bay, Boston, MA 02117***



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 2015-2016 National Conference - Springfield College, Springfield, Massachusetts - March 29th - April 1st



AVP TOGETHER



CHANGING HANDS



PLEASANT WORK



DISCUSSING IT FURTHER

© PHOTOS BY JIM PEPPLER

MORE PHOTOS ON THE WEB: [AFTERWALLSTOBRIDGES.ANYCITIES.COM](http://AFTERWALLSTOBRIDGES.ANYCITIES.COM)

### **The Loss of a Beautiful AVP Spirit**

*VICTORIA BAKER COOLEY  
April 9, 1943 - April 10, 2006  
From the Cooley Family in Dundee, NY  
April 10, 2006*

FROM THE COOLEY  
FAMILY IN DUNDEE, NY,  
April 10, 2006

Victoria Baker Cooley died peacefully at home about two o'clock this morning in the arms and hands of her family, with singing, tears and thanks for her good life. Vicki lived a full life. She lived with breast cancer the past five years, remaining active in various causes. We grieve our loss and the years she might yet have continued to help transform the world and be with family. We feel supported by the wide circle of friends whom she loved and helped. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to

Alternatives to Violence Project  
(AVP/NY) c/o Etta Roebig  
60 Leber Rd.  
Blauvelt, NY 10913



### **Remembering Vicki Rich of Brooklyn Remembers**

*Excerpt from the Brooklyn Quaker  
April 10, 2006*

“...I also remember being astonished and deeply grateful when she came to my hometown of Rushville, New York, to attend my mother's funeral in 1999. She had not known my mother or others in my family, but came to support a fellow-Quaker in a time of sadness. I knew no other Quakers near Rushville, and had not expected any Quakers to be there. It was immensely comforting to see her.

“Vicki once wrote of what she discovered in herself when she was asked to reflect on how she wanted to live.

“ ‘...I was amazed at the simple clarity of what came to me: I do not want to be dismissive in my attitude toward anyone, ever. That is quite a bit more demanding than “No putdowns,” and it is taking time as well as effort for me to learn what it means, but I trust it completely as True.’ ”



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- ❖ Small AVP logo on upper left
- ❖ AVP Alternatives to Violence Project

**back:**

- ❖ Large Dove (centered)

**Style B:**

**front:**

- ❖ Create Community not Conflict
- ❖ AVP
- ❖ The Alternatives to Violence Project

**back:**

- ❖ Transforming Power Mandala  
*(designed by Steve Angell)*
- ❖ "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

# Transformer Gets 5th Issue

At the AVP-USA 2006 National Conference, it was decided to create a special issue of *the Transformer* each year, dedicated to the upcoming conference. The additional issue will be sent to all outside facilitators and others who may request it, including facilitators who do not have subscriptions to *the Transformer*. This will allow the Conference Committee members to be guaranteed space enough to present the conference fully without being crowded by articles, exercises and other important information in the regular quarterly issues. Prior to a conference, the regular issues will carry only a brief notice with contact information, conference web site URL, and asking for ideas and contributions from facilitators. . . . . *Communications Committee*

## THE NEXT LEVEL

Help the Transformer to grow along with AVP and the growing need for facilitators to share their workshop and Transforming Power experiences. Talk with fellow facilitators about having someone in your region or local group to actively solicit articles, new exercise and light n' lively write-ups, successes, achievements, facilitation problems, suggestions and vision for the future, and to forward to the Transformer editor, articles and other items composed in advance. The person in your area taking on this responsibility would also remind facilitators to share their stories and information and follow up on proposed articles, etc.

Please send your suggestions to Doug Couch, the Transformer editor, at [couchdouglas@aol.com](mailto:couchdouglas@aol.com). All suggestions and names of those who may volunteer to help will be discussed by the Communications Committee to consider assembling a team or committee to manage the Transformer, its scope and content, and to ensure enough quality items will be available for each regular issue. Also...this is a request to send more articles now.

*the Transformer Editor in Association with the Communications Committee*

Boal's

# Light n' Lively / Exercise Setup

Here's a neat exercise I learned from Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed:

To set up groups (*I often do this before role plays*) here is an exercise that could be used as a Light and Lively in and of itself.

Have people clear as large a space as possible. Have them wander around in the space- so that the entire group fills the entire space; have them try to be equidistant from one another as they wander around the space like a slow moving electron cloud.

Facilitator calls out a number, say, "3!" Participants quickly make groups of 3 with the people nearest them. Then the facilitator calls out "Resume!" and participants resume wandering around again.

If the facilitator thinks ahead to the next exercise requiring groups of a certain size (or a certain number of groups), and does a little math in advance...to end this exercise, the facilitator can simply call out the number that creates the number of groups needed for the next exercise.

So, if the facilitator needs three groups and has 21 participants, they just call out "7!" and seven people quickly come together... in three groups, obviously! Of course other facilitators can always round out the number if it is necessary to have groups of equal size. I often use this to make groups for Roles Plays, Broken Squares, or Construction Games.

*Adapted from Augusto Boal's  
Theatre of the Oppressed  
Eric Smith, Denver, Colorado*

## AVP IN THE ANDES

by Newton Garver  
East Concord, NY, USA

2005 to 2006

dos mil y cinco a dos mil y seis

## PAV EN EL ANDES

sido autor cerca Newton Garver  
Concordia del este, NY, EEUU

At the end of last October Jens Braun and Newton Garver facilitated an AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) mini-workshop in Spanish in La Paz, attended by some 20 interested Quakers from three yearly meetings and spanning a wide range of ages. The response was enthusiastic. Five volunteers immediately formed a committee, which reported in ten days with dates and budget for two full workshops to be held in mid-January.

Despite the time pressure, funding was arranged and the workshops took place under the leadership of Jens Braun and Val Liveoak. One of the workshops was a Basic, with fifteen participants, the other a Training for Facilitators with thirteen participants. Again the group immediately set a date for the next workshops, which are to be an Advanced and then two simultaneous Basics during the last week in June 2006. For these two Basics the newly trained Bolivians will serve as apprentice facilitators.

There is still a way to go before the core group has enough experience to proceed on their own, and they will always appreciate having other lead trainers come down and work with them, but these five workshops in six months mean that AVP (PAV in Spanish) is off and running in the southern Andes.

AVP in Bolivia is under the aegis of the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund office in La Paz, Bernabé Yujra coordinator.



En el final del pasado mes de octubre Jens Braun y Newton Garver facilitado un mini-taller de PAV (Programa Alternativas a la Violencia) en español en La Paz, atendido por unos 20 Quakers interesados a partir de tres reuniones anuales y atravesar una amplia gama de edades. La respuesta era entusiástica. Cinco los voluntarios formaron inmediatamente a comité, con quien divulgó en diez días fechas y presupuesto para que dos talleres llenos sean sostenidos a los mediados de enero.

A pesar de la presión del tiempo, el financiamiento fue arreglado y los talleres ocurrió bajo dirección de Jens Braun y de Val Liveoak. Uno de los talleres eran Básicos, con quince participantes, el otro un Entrenamiento para Facilitators con trece participantes. El grupo fijó otra vez inmediatamente a fecha para los talleres siguientes, que son ser Avanzados y entonces dos fundamentos simultáneos durante la semana pasada en junio de 2006. Para estos dos fundamentos los bolivianos nuevamente entrenados servirán como facilitators del aprendiz.

Todavía hay una manera de ir antes de que el grupo de la base tenga bastantes la experiencia a proceder en sus el propios, y ellos apreciarán siempre tener otros amaestradores del plomo vienen abajo y trabajan con ellos, pero estos cinco talleres en seis meses signifique que PAV está apagado y funcionando en los Andes meridionales.

PAV en Bolivia está bajo la égida de la educación boliviana del Quaker Financie la oficina en el La Paz, coordinador de Bernabé Yujra.

**AVP DISTRIBUTION SERVICE IS HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE** that we have secured the rights to distribute two excellent video presentations which will be useful in informing others about the Alternatives to Violence Project.

We are now ready to accept orders for these new videos for shipment early in July. The deadline for ordering to be included in our initial duplication is June 30th. We will then produce the circulation copies and have them in the mail to you by July 15th.

The two new videos may be had in DVD or VHS and are \$16 each. ~~If you get your order in by June 30, both may be had for \$27.00 + S&H, a savings of \$5.00.~~

*(Editor's Note: This deadline & special price was announced via the AVP-L list on June 8<sup>th</sup> and may no longer be available by the time you receive this issue.)*

### **“WELCOME TO AVP - THE SPIRIT AND SKILLS OF NONVIOLENCE”**

This video will help you introduce AVP to interested prison officials and potential participants in and outside prison walls, and engage their participation and support. Initially produced for community cable access, it is a quality video with a number of stories and examples displaying local and prison workshops, frank testimonials, and a discussion of prison work which emphasizes that any and all of us can make a difference. The video sequences are arranged so portions of the video may be shown if a shorter viewing is necessary.

*- - - Produced by Friends for a Nonviolent World in Minnesota*

#### **Order: “Welcome to AVP”**

Available in VHS or DVD -R, 28 minutes - \$16.00 +S&H

S&H= DVD \$1.00 - 1st class mail, VHS \$1.50 media mail, \$4.05 priority mail.

### **“ANOTHER WAY ?”**

It follows four key subjects...Mick, Barry, Ed and Terry...through intense Alternatives to Violence workshops in prison, and then revisits the same men three years later.

Could a series of AVP workshops challenge ingrained patterns of violence, and would these changes be sustained in individual lives once the workshops were over? *“Another Way?”* lets us get to know these men, see some of the challenges they face, and lets us think about what this means for the rest of us.

*- - - Produced in Australia by Trish FitzSimons.*

#### **“Order: Another Way”**

Available in VHS or DVD -R, 53 minutes - \$16 + S&H

S&H= DVD \$1.00 - 1st class mail, VHS \$1.50 media mail, \$4.05 priority mail.

Note that the earlier video containing three 12-minute segments from AVP/NY, HIPP and RAVE, and a 28-minute segment, “The Belly of the Beast” is also available.

**See page 15 for Order, Shipping & Handling information from Alan Taplow at the . . .**

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**Signing on to the AVP-L list**

*Peter Hoover (Persistent Peter)  
 Trumansburg, New York, USA*

AVP-L@CORNELLE.EDU is a discussion list open to certified trainers of creative conflict-resolution workshops held under the auspices of the Alternatives to Violence Project, Inc., or its approved national (U.S.) or international equivalents. It is designed to facilitate communication among these individuals, with discussions to center around facilitation techniques, workshop exercises, and other useful information pertaining to the mechanics of facilitating AVP workshops. To preserve the confidentiality of workshop participants, please make comments about such individuals generic.

To subscribe, send an e-mail message indicating where and when you obtained your AVP facilitator certification, where you currently train, and any other pertinent information you care to include to the list owner, Peter Hoover, at [prh4@cornell.edu](mailto:prh4@cornell.edu).

**Signing on to the AVP-L2 list**

*Richard Krouskop (Rambunctious Rick)  
 Shreveport, Louisiana, USA*

Want to share your work with, or thoughts on: restorative justice, prison reform, school violence, the (.....Insert your favorite region here) conflict between (.....side A ) and (....side B), etc.? That's what the AVP-L2 E-mail discussion group is designed for.

On AVP-L2, there are no restrictions: just "anything in which you think other AVP facilitators might be interested."

Subscription to AVP-L2 is automated and done entirely through the AVP/USA website. Be certain you are using a computer with e-mail connected to the e-mail address you wish to use for the list. You will be sending an e-mail to register and your return address must be the e-mail address to which you wish to receive list traffic.

- Go to: [www.avpusa.org](http://www.avpusa.org)
  - Go to the Facilitator's page (click on the AVP/USA tab)
  - Login Name: "member"
  - Login Password: "texashug"
- Sign up for AVP-L2 (and also AVP-L) near the bottom of that page.

See more details about the new DVD videos on page 13...

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**NOTE:** In prisons, the bound manuals are often preferred because it is easier to keep pages together.

**TWO NEW AVP VIDEOS in DVD & VHS**  
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**3 - "Another Way?"**  
 See Shipping Charges for New DVD & VHS

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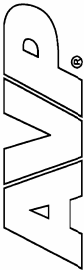
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