



*Alternatives to Violence Project Newsletter*

# the Transformer

*for AVP Workshop Leaders*  
*Winter 1997*

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## WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

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### AVP in Cuba

*by* **Edwardo I. Diez**, *AVP Florida*

What a joy it was to facilitate the first Alternatives to Violence Workshop in Cuba! Twenty participants took part in the weekend Basic "taller" (pronounced TA-YER) in the quaint coastal town of Gibara (HEE-BAA-RA), August 8-10, 1997. Sponsored by Cuba Yearly Meeting, with the assistance of the Miami based Cuban Quaker Project, the workshop was the long awaited outcome of many months of preparation and bureaucratic navigation, involving special permissions from two governments not yet at peace.

Not prepared to violate any laws, the facilitation team was "licensed" by the US to do church related work in Cuba and we procured special visas from the Cuban government to allow the same. Given my Spanish language proficiency, I served as Lead Facilitator and the team included my two eldest daughters, Alicia and Lilia, and Stephen L. Angell.

The workshop was very well received and I was once again reminded of the cross-cultural validity of the AVP model. We used "Cuban Spanish" and all role plays and topics were tuned to the very special circumstances of the Cuban people. Our biggest challenge was translating for Stephen, who valiantly tried to communicate utilizing all forms of

universal non-verbals as well as a few words of Spanish. Thankfully, we had participants who were English proficient enough to help throughout the weekend.

The evaluations were outstanding and they are ready for a Second Level workshop. Working closely with the leadership of the Iglesia de Los Amigos, the plan is to first concentrate on community workshops and systematically expose nonviolence to those in five Quaker communities in the eastern end of the island, after this cohort of participants completes training. The Basic participants represented every Monthly Meeting, including three pastors, two pastor spouses and several seminary students. Now that they have experienced what AVP is like, all agree to offer future Basics to include interested non-Quakers.

We look forward to someday establishing AVP in Havana, but we are taking one step at a time and want to do a quality AVP seeding in partnership with our Cuban colleagues. Working out of Havana would be easier for the foreign traveler, but history tells us that most revolutionary movements start in the eastern end and that's where most Cuban Quakers live.

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## WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

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### **AVP in Cuba!** *continued*

The Cuban countryside is full of billboards calling the people to war, "al combate". The cultivating and harvesting of peace in Cuba must be internally managed and those of us outside their experience need to remain mindful that we intend to be instruments of good and in no way instruments of cultural imperialism.

Friends in Cuba are committed to learning to live with difference and peace. They have asked us to return soon, to continue the AVP series. A team is now being put together for a possible Advanced in February.

### **AVP in Tonga**

If you're looking for a tropical paradise, Tonga is the place to go. This is a group of islands 1,200 miles north of New Zealand, near Samoa and Fiji.

Elaine Dyer and Ralph Johnson of New Zealand visited Tonga twice, in December 1996 and July 1997. With the help of a local contact, Sr. Eileen Dwyer, Basic, Advanced and Training for Trainers workshops were completed. A core of eight Tongan trainers has been established and they are at work conducting monthly workshops and translating materials into the Tongan language.

### **Limon, Colorado...**

## **A Whole Town to Take AVP**

*by Helon Taylor Crisp, New Foundations*

Imagine a town where the students and teachers and the parents and the police and the sheriff's department and the mental health workers are all trained in AVP, with an initial core group to take it to neighboring towns throughout a whole county. The dream is there, the funding is there, and the actuality will soon be there.

It's the dream of Steve Gilbertson, Assistant Director of the Centennial Mental Health Center of Lincoln County in Limon, CO. He has secured a state grant to implement a complete training program based on AVP, has enlisted the support of the school administration, the Wellness Foundation and Line-up (Healthy Community Grass-Roots Initiative) and others in the local area, and is well on his way to making the dream a reality.

New Foundations will train the initial group of community leaders – a cross section of the town's citizenry, including teachers, parents, students, law enforcement officers, health workers, et al – and will assist with their apprenticeship. New Foundations is currently working with with the schools in Limon to set up the framework and the dates.

Once there is a core of trainers, the plan is to take the program into neighboring towns until it is county-wide, for a community-building project unique in Colorado; one that should become a model for grass-roots peace work everywhere.

There is a lot of talk about violence. Here is a town that is doing something about nonviolence.

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Note: The Education Committee is revising the AVP Basic Manual which has been in use for 10 years. Please send any suggestions for changes to Candace LaRue, 200 Tyler Terrace, Liverpool, NY 13088

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## Death of Larry Apsey

AVP lost one of its founders on November 30 as Larry Apsey died in his sleep at the age of 96. He was a peace activist, civil rights worker, a dedicated follower of the principles of Gandhi and at the same time a talented attorney who helped to prosecute anti-trust suits and served as the corporate counsel for a large multi-national firm.

Larry was always led by the spirit (a.k.a. Transforming Power). In the late 50's and 60's, Larry became involved in demonstrations at military bases and in Washington against biological weapons and the Vietnam War. He worked in the civil rights movement and served as a lawyer defending demonstrators who had been arrested and jailed.

A life-changing message came to Larry during a meditation one night in 1966 at 2:00am:

"Do not plan in order to make the project grow. Follow the light from day to day and let the project do its own growing. Deadlines and goals do not have to be met by you... You are a tool in his hands; your task the same whether humble or great."

Larry did not even know what the "project" was at this time, but after his retirement from the corporate world, there was a need for a full-time volunteer Office Administrator for the Quaker Project on Community Conflict.

This gave him many opportunities to use Transforming Power leading a staff of volunteers that who often were marching to the beat of very different drums.

Eventually, the Quaker Project on Community Conflict transformed itself into the Alter-

natives to Violence Project.

The opportunity came when Larry attended a spiritual study group at Green Haven Prison in New York. There he met Roger Whitfield, an inmate from the "Think Tank Concept." Roger knew of Larry's nonviolence work and asked him to lead a workshop for the Think Tank.

The first prison workshop team included Larry Apsey, Bernard LaFayette and Steve Stalones in March 1975. Meanwhile, a second workshop was being organized by Janet Lugo at Auburn Prison in July 1975. The team included Larry Apsey, Janet Lugo, Ellen Flanners, Bernard LaFayette and Ed Stabler.

In the late 70's, as the requests for more and more workshops grew, Larry saw that an independent organization was needed. He took the legal steps to incorporate the program as the Alternatives to Violence Project. Steve Levinski assisted in building the structure and creating much of what we know today as the Basic Workshop.

In the early 80's, Larry served as the volunteer Administrative Officer for AVP and he built a solid organizational structure and an effective office.

Some of Larry's many gifts to AVP were:

1. To be led by the spirit and to trust Transforming Power to work with individuals whom others considered hopeless.
2. A sense of organization and structure that enabled him to build an enduring organization.

Larry Apsey has passed this great legacy on to us and asks us to walk in his shoes.

*A memorial service will be held at Poughkeepsie Friends Meeting at 2:00pm on December 27, 1997.*

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## AROUND AVP

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From the Annual Meeting in New Jersey on Labor Day...

### Highlights of AVP-USA Summer Board Meeting

The 1997 AVP-USA was held at the Burlington Conference Center in Butlington, NJ over Labor Day. The 40 AVPers who attended came from all over the country ranging from Seattle to Miami

In spite the significant increase in income generated over the past year, our income is still insufficient to support a national office with a salaried executive director. The payment of salary has been sporadic over the past year with instances where the salary went unpaid for several months at a time. Presently, although salary is current, a significant amount of benefits is still owed. Once again, for the moment, we have insufficient funds to continue without incurring further debt.

Marjorie Kerr made a proposal to the Board, and after significant discussion it was decided that although she will continue as Executive Director, AVP-USA would be unburdened of the **legal** obligation of salary and benefits, but not the **moral** obligation. Each month she will review the funds that are available and issue payroll of what is available up to what she is owed.

This arrangement automatically terminates at the Winter Board Meeting. The Board commits to doing the necessary work to move the organization ahead financially and to offer a contract for the position of Executive Director to Marjorie Kerr. If the Board is not in a position to offer a contract at the Winter Board Meeting, the Board of Directors stated its intention to move to an all volunteer organiza-

tion with the Board of Directors accepting the responsibilities of Executive Director.

Candace LaRue and Ann Ward accepted appointment as co-chairs of the Fundraising and Finance Committee. They developed an initial fundraising plan and drafted a grant proposal to be submitted to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. A summary of their fundraising plans of action and needs are included elsewhere in the Transformer.

The Board accepted the nominations of Rick Krouskop as Chair, Ed Sweeney as Treasurer, Henry Bernstein as Recording Secretary, Janet Lugo as corresponding Secretary and Toby Riley as Vice-Chair. Diana Couch, John Shuford and Toby Riley were appointed to three year terms as At Large Members. Debby Wood and Donn Williams left the Board.

Based on the recommendations of the Structure Committee, the Board authorized the Executive Director to have the authority and responsibility to administer the day-to-day operations of AVP-USA, including check writing and maintaining financial records. The Executive Director is encouraged to establish a management support team.

The current policy regarding the minimum number of hours for a certificate was reviewed in light of a request to reduce it. No changes were approved at this time; however, the meeting expressed a desire to continue looking at this issue. Review of the policy prohibiting the payment of facilitators for non-inmate prison workshops was referred to the Winter Board Meeting.

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## AROUND AVP

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All Facilitators Invited...

### AVP/USA Meets in New York in January

A very important meeting to decide the future of AVP-USA will be held over the Martin Luther King Holiday weekend. All facilitators are invited to attend.

The Winter Board Meeting will be held at Purchase Quaker Meeting In Westchester County, New York. The Meeting starts on Friday evening, January 16, and ends on Monday, January 19, after lunch.

#### What's going on at the meeting?

The most important issue is whether the national office in Houston can continue as it currently exists or whether AVP-USA will need to restructure to an all volunteer organization. This may involve the Board assuming the duties and functions provided by the national office.

**The Board Meeting** will focus on the future of AVP/USA. Agenda items are:

- Plans for putting AVP/USA on the road to financial stability, especially involving the national office.
- Discussion of circumstances where facilitators might be paid (ie: workshops for prison staff.)
- Discussion of a proposed reduction in workshop hours.
- Report of Conference Committee on the International Conference in Houston.

**Mini-workshops** Participants will share new ideas and there will be new exercises from the Education Committee.

**Accommodations and Costs** Purchase Friends Meeting is located about 20 miles

north of New York City in Purchase, New York. The Meetinghouse is adjacent to the Westchester County Airport.

Those flying should book to the Westchester County Airport (often listed as "White Plains.") The airport is served by Delta, Northwest and United airlines. When you arrive, just call the Meetinghouse at 914-946-0206 and someone will pick you up within 15 minutes. (The local taxi is very expensive.)

Hospitality will be provided in the homes of local AVP members and by members of Purchase Meeting. (Please bring a sleeping bag to make it more convenient for the host.) Breakfasts will be provided by the hosts.

The cost of the weekend will be about \$100 including lunch and dinner for three days and a \$50.00 contribution to the travel pool.

To register, call the national office for a registration packet at 713-747-9999

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### 1998 International Conference in Houston

The Labor Day Conference will run from Friday September 4-8. Because appropriate sites were not available in Miami, the 1998 AVP International Conference has been moved to the Houston area. Since the International Network has focused on Latin America, Houston is convenient for AVPers from Central America. About 30 international delegates are expected and an international panel is being planned.

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### International Conference *continued*

A special theme of the conference will be diversity, and the keynote leader will focus on this topic. Of course there will be loads of exciting mini-workshops and opportunities to connect with AVPers from around the world.

The site will be the the Christian Renewal Center in Dickinson, Texas, about 30 miles south of Houston. There are hiking trails, a swimming pool and meditation pond. Of course everything is air conditioned. Accommodations include eight person cabins and

semi-private rooms with bath.

Nearby attractions include Gulf Coast beaches, the Johnson Space Center and the Houston Holocaust Museum. AVP is seeking to have a mini workshop on conflict resolution in space from the Johnson Space Center. A reception for AVP and other peace groups is planned at the Holocaust Museum.

Hobby Airport is the closer, but transportation can be arranged from Bush Airport also. Reserve the Labor Day weekend on your calendar and keep an eye out for bargain fares.

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## Prison

*by Kareem Anu Zodok, Rising in the Fire, Inmate, Fishkill Correctional Facility, New York*

When I concern myself with doing only what others "think" I can do,

I lay the floor to my Prison.

When I conform my activities based on what others might say,

I put the bars around my Prison.

When I allow what others have done or are doing to determine what I can do,

I build the roof to my Prison,

When I allow fear, competition or greed to guide my actions,

I lock myself up and throw away the key.

It is my concern over what others say, do or think about me

That imprisons my mind, body and soul.

What other people think about me is not my concern.

My life is the piece of me that equips me to have a goal.

My goal is the piece that will equip me with confidence.

My confidence is the piece that will give me persistence.

My persistence is the piece that will insure my success.

Successful people succeed because they learn from their failures.

A mistake, an error, a poor choice, a bad decision does not equal

"There is something wrong with me."

It means I am on my way to being better.

It is not my environment, it is not my history, it is not my education or my ability,

it is the quality of my mind that predicts my future.

Peace!

*Written by Kareem Anu Zodak after his first day of a Basic Workshop.*

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 AVP FORUM
 

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## Why We Don't Forgive

by Fred Feucht, AVP New York

Forgiveness is the ultimate goal when conflicts arise and people have been hurt. It is the last step in the conflict resolution process. It is certainly an important aspect of our workshops.

Forgiveness is the message of Jesus and Buddha and Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. and nearly every great spiritual leader. We have all heard this message ten thousand times. We know how good it feels to be forgiven and to give up the guilt and anger. So, why is it so hard to forgive?

Our egos give us many clever reasons not to forgive. Some of the reasons that we have all experienced are the following:

**Forgiving someone is a sign of weakness.**

We might have to give up our tough, macho attitude and tell the truth. In fact, forgiving someone is a sign of strength. I think you will find that it is usually the strongest and most mature individuals that are the first to forgive.

**Forgiving someone means that we have to give up being a victim.** Sometimes we like to feel sorry for ourselves. This is a very human reaction. We may also want people to sympathize with us because we have been hurt or oppressed. Children often feel like victims when dealing with the adult world. But we are adults now and need to give up our childish ways. Taking responsibility for myself and forgiving others is the path to personal strength.

**Forgiving someone means we have to give up our anger.** Anger can be addictive.

Anger may help us to feel powerful. Our anger may intimidate others. But we all know anger is not good for our emotional and physical health. Forgiveness is the step to inner health.

**Forgiving someone means we have to give up our desire for revenge.** When we have been hurt, we often feel put down and disrespected. It is a natural urge to want to get back at the person who hurt us in an effort to put ourselves up. However, we all know that instead of correcting the balance, we may initiate a cycle of revenge which can escalate. Forgiveness is the tool to break the cycle of revenge.

**Forgiving someone means we have to give up our feelings of being right.** We may have to give up our attitude of self righteousness. For many of us it is important to be "good" and to oppose anything we see as "wrong" or "evil." In some ways, it may be hard for us to maintain our position as being a "good" person unless there are "bad" people out there that we can oppose. In fact, we may need to hang on to the "bad" people out there as a way to maintain our feelings as being "good." Forgiving someone may mean that we need to give up being "good" and start being honest and real. Then the people we are in conflict with can become honest and real also.

Learning forgiveness in our personal lives will make us stronger people. We can then share our ideas to help to make the lives of our workshop participants more peaceful also.

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A new exercise...

## Learning to See

by Gini Floyd, AVP-Maryland

**Purpose:** To examine some of our misperceptions about (and the nature of our judgements about) others, and the mind-games the ego thrives on; to become aware of the clear, peaceful, wise and living inner Self that is part of each of us,

**Materials:** Two handouts:

1. Learning to See
2. Try this Every Day

**Time:** 60-70 minutes

**Facilitator's Introductory Remarks:** We can create positive transitions in the world by becoming aware of the bias, misperceptions and stereotyping to which we are all inclined; and by being open to understanding them and overcoming them. Robin Casarjian is the author of a book called "Houses of Healing," written for people who are incarcerated. She calls it "a prisoner's guide to inner power and freedom." We're going to read a summary of one chapter from the book... (pass out copies of excerpts from Chapter 9).

Ask for a volunteer to begin reading. Continue with volunteers reading one paragraph each. (This helps to avoid embarrassment when there are semi-literate participants.)

After the chapter is read, the facilitator asks for comments. This might include the following questions:

- Would you be able to explain your "core-Self" to someone? What would you say?
- How does what we read connect to the concept of transforming power?
- Participants form groups or 4-5 and discuss the experience and ideas.

Reassemble following a break and introduce the following section of the exercise:

### Seeing the Light: Part I

**Facilitator's Introductory Remarks:** This exercise is based on the chapter we just read from "Houses of Healing." Its purpose is to practice seeing people in a new way, without passing judgement on them. By allowing ourselves to see beyond outer appearances, we can come to an awareness of the light or the true self in every other person. We do this through a visualization.

Get comfortable with feet flat on the floor and back straight. Close your eyes and think of anyone who comes to mind, whether in this room or not.

Have you made judgements about this person? What were those judgements?

Quietly and inwardly recognize that this person has a peaceful, loving and wise nature – the coreSelf.

Say to yourself, "That person is, in essence, good, loving and wise, no matter what I see with my eyes."

After several minutes, tell the participants to open their eyes.

#### Debrief:

- What was it like to do this exercises?
- Could you practice this way of seeing at any time? Waiting in line? In the hallways?

Then give the participants the handout "Try This Every Day" and ask them to do it as a personal exercise which they can bring to the next session if they wish.



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### **Houses of Healing, Chapter 9** by Robin Casarjian *(read as part of Learning to See)*

"Each of us has a core Self, the part of us that is clear, peaceful, wise and loving. And each of us has a personality or ego. The nature of the ego is always to judge. When we see or meet someone the ego goes into action, even without our conscious awareness. We judge others by the way they look or act, or by something we've heard about their past.

We perceive them as "cool" or "stupid" or we give them some label that suits us. Do you do this labeling as you walk through the halls or hang out in the gym? Do you label people you haven't even met? The ego only sees part of the picture and mistakes it for the whole picture. That's the nature of the ego – to see in a limited way, and to decide whether we like the person or not. Then every future interaction we have with this person is based on this decision we made in the past. New insight and understanding have no chance.

Because the ego is always judging and comparing it leaves us feeling inferior or superior to others. We either feel a sense of not being good enough or an inflated sense of arrogance or superiority. We think we are a better or lesser person.

When we operate from our ego we automatically look for what separates us and makes us different from others. The thinking might look like: "I'm in here for this crime and you're in here for that crime." or "I'm one race, you're another." or "I have a certain educational level, you have a different one."

In a sense, you are the objects of millions of peoples' ego judgements right now. People may not really know who you are, but since

you are part of a group called "criminals," they make their judgements about you. Some may be accurate and many may not have a thing to do with the truth. They really don't see you. They are lost in judgement and fear.

To see the whole truth about "prisoners" or "criminals" people would have to realize that even though most men and women in prison are guilty of crimes, there is a fundamental goodness within them, even though their ego once propelled their criminal behavior. Although most people in prison (and out of prison) are emotionally wounded in some way, there is wholeness and potential for healing. There is an anger and rage in many prisoners from a past and present of being disrespected and demeaned within the family and society. Yet if someone were to really see, they would find the potential for peace. They would see the darkness created by fear as well as the light of the true Self.

The true Self, the clear peaceful coreSelf, looks for common ground instead of differences between us. We all have in common that inner goodness, but it's often buried under fear and acts of toughness, disrespect or meanness. The only way to see that core of sanity and goodness is through the willingness to see through the eyes of the heart. Only the heart or the Self has the boldness and vision to see the light in another. Only the Self can see light through a veil of clouds.

Seeing the Self in another is a key to knowing who you really are. Each time you acknowledge the light in another, you affirm that reality in yourself.

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 AVP FORUM
 

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New exercise...**Learning to See** *Continued from page 7*

### **Try This Every Day... Forgiveness as Transforming Power**

We can create positive transitions in the world by focusing on personal change within ourselves. We can learn how to grapple effectively with negative emotions and to release them from our hearts and minds. The process of forgiving one another for past wrongs, real or imagined, is of the greatest importance. Visualization is a tool to assist us in this process. It can be done alone or in a group using the following steps:

First, get comfortable in your chair, put your feet flat on the floor, straighten your back. Find some blank wall space in the room on which to focus your attention. Close your eyes and see the blank space in your mind's eye.

Now, let that space disappear and in its place see the face of a person, living or dead, with whom you have had a difficult experience.

In your mind, hear the voice and see the face of that person.

As you do this, ask the following questions quietly to yourself. Allow yourself 15 or 20 seconds to think about each question.

1. **Did you first love this person?**
2. **Were you ever afraid of this person?**
3. **Did you ever want to strike this person?**
4. **Did you ever want to kill this person?**

*(Remember that you alone know the answers to these questions.)*

Go back in your mind to the first time you had difficulty with the person and review that experience.

1. **What caused the difficulty ? Be honest.**
2. **What are the characteristics about this relationship that you didn't want?**
3. **Did you ever want another kind of a relationship with this person than you have now?**

See the face clearly, hear the voice again. And now...

1. **For just half a minute, forgive yourself for anything you ever did, for anything you ever said that hurt this person. Say to yourself "I forgive myself for..."**
2. **Pray to whomever your understanding of God is and ask for forgiveness.**

Hear the voice, see the face, then...

1. **Look and forgive this person. In your mind say, "I forgive you," to this person; even though this may be extremely difficult.**
2. **Then, for just half a minute, look at the face, surround it with light in your mind, Bless it and send it love.**

Try this exercise once, then daily for a week, for two weeks, then three weeks, and see how your feelings change. Practice it as you would anything you want to learn and do well. You may surprise yourself because forgiveness transforms the one who forgives!



## A Christmas Gift to AVP

We ask you to put AVP-USA on your gift list this Christmas. The national office supports AVP throughout the country. It gives information to those who want to learn about the AVP program. It answers the questions of trainers and local AVP groups. It supplies the manuals that make the program work. It supports the people who are developing the new materials and manuals for the future. It is the hub that keeps us all connected as a network. We need a national office!!!

As we write, we do not know whether we will have a national office in 1998. The national office needs your help. As you do your Christmas shopping and mail your Christmas cards, please take the time to write a check and mail it to:

AVP-USA  
P.O. Box 300431  
Houston, TX 77230-0431

We urge you to remember your local AVP group this Christmas also.

## In Memory of Gertrude Marshall

*by Val Hinshaw, AVP Missouri*

With a great sense of loss, the Columbia, Missouri AVP Council reports the loss of Gertrude McIver Matthews Marshall Marble on May 23, 1997 at 83 years of age.

To say that Gertrude was a community activist is an understatement. She was a founder of several organizations whose concerns were peace and justice issues: a found-

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ing member of Columbia Friends Meeting, the Peace Studies Program at the University of Missouri, Columbia Interfaith Peace Alliance and in the last 12 years of her life, she lent her organizational skills and energy to the Alternatives to Violence Project in Missouri.

"Grateful Gertrude," as she was known and loved in AVP workshops, strengthened the Mid-Missouri AVP Council as we led workshops in prisons, community, and in schools for staff and students. Columbia Meeting, Boonville Correctional Center, her family and many friends in the community will miss Gertrude's quiet and cheerful leadership, but are in turn grateful that she has been in our lives.

May we be blessed by her Transforming Power.



## Steve Angell Honored by Haverford College

Steve has always been an activist and a peacemaker. He has been involved in AVP from the very beginning in 1975. In May, Haverford College awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Steve to recognize his lifelong dedication to social change and crime prevention, as well as his work in spreading the AVP program nationally and internationally.

Steve is currently in Croatia spreading the AVP message to refugees from the war in Bosnia.

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Articles inside...

**AVP in Cuba**

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**A Whole Town Takes AVP**

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**New Exercise**

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**AVP-USA Meeting**

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**AVP Publications**

|                                     |                 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Basic Manual</b>                 | \$7.50          |
| <b>Advanced Manual</b>              | \$10.00         |
| <b>Training for Trainers Manual</b> | \$10.00         |
| <b>Basic &amp; Adv. Supplement</b>  | \$10.00         |
| <b>AVP Brochures</b>                | \$15.00 per 100 |

Send your order to the AVP-USA office:

Alternatives to Violence Project-USA  
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 Houston, TX 77230-0431

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Facilitator Mailing List: Janet Lugo

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Please send any address changes to Janet Lugo at: 46 Main Street, 9, Mechanicsville, NY 12118

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