

## Mill Valley Seniors for Peace

### Why I Demonstrate Against War

*"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."* Mahatma Gandhi

Every Friday for eight years members of Mill Valley Seniors for Peace have demonstrated against war on the corner of Miller Avenue and Camino Alto. Though community support is amazing, some ask what are we accomplishing, what's the point? Here are five reasons I demonstrate.

1. I demonstrate for myself. I feel strongly that war is wrong and a terrible waste. By demonstrating I act on those feelings and reduce my feelings of frustration and helplessness. When people ask what have I accomplished, I recall Mahatma Gandhi's words, *"Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it."*

2. I demonstrate for other seniors. I am in awe of so many seniors who give so much of themselves to others. By demonstrating in my anti-war cause, I join them, support them and honor them.

3. I demonstrate to carry on the long American tradition of demonstrating to make this, as our Constitution says, "a more perfect union." American Quakers began protesting slavery in 1688, drawing many others over the years to the cause, but slavery didn't end until 177 years later in 1865. Protests to grant women the right to vote began in 1848 and ended 72 years later in 1920. The anti-war movement may take just as long to convince Americans that war is not the answer.

4. I demonstrate to support the men and women of our armed forces. We owe them our independence and our freedom. But now Americans are asking them to sacrifice in the longest wars of our history when we civilians aren't willing to share in their sacrifice even by paying for the wars. I demonstrate to bring them home.

5. I demonstrate to support young people. They learn of the great military victories that gave birth to our nation, expanded its territory, kept it united and made it a world superpower. But they know less about the last fifty years of wars in which political and military leaders led us into war with false

claims, misrepresented the progress of the military actions and persisted in war long after it was clear that the military objectives were unobtainable. By demonstrating I encourage young people to question authority and to realize that war is not the answer.

Whenever I think about giving up demonstrating against war, I recall this saying of Gandhi,

*"You may never know what results come of your action, but if you do nothing there will be no result."*

Note: These reasons reflect a composite of the views of several members of Mill Valley Seniors for Peace.