



BEHIND THE SCENES

PROJECT AGAINST VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS

Bennington County Domestic And Sexual Violence Services

March 2007 — Nancy Feinberg, Editor

TIME FOR A CHANGE *Joan Sakalas, Executive Director*

Tonight I flipped from station to station in a search for news. What I found was repetition and brevity, the same photos and the same stories. So what does this have to do with domestic and sexual violence? Unfortunately, human violence, when presented as brief, sensational acts by “evil” people gives us permission to distance ourselves from violence. The pedophile and batterer become either insane or “bad” people. We focus on details worthy of scandal news and miss the larger issues facing our communities.

What is it about us as citizens and residents of the United States that allows us to tolerate such high levels of violence? A recent report about domestic and sexual violence in Vermont cited a 50% rise in numbers of reported cases over the past ten years. Nationally, the figures are just as daunting. Clearly prisons, though an incredibly big business, have not served as a deterrent to violence. Who exactly, then, does domestic and sexual violence against women and children serve that we continue to plod along with the same strategies even though they do not provide positive results. Although women are certainly represented among the numbers of batterers and pedophiles, their relatively small numbers in comparison make it more useful for analysis sake to look at men.

What if we look at gender and gender expectations for behavior? Lately I’ve been reading a book that characterizes violence as a “public health” issue.¹ The author argues that we should regard violence of all kinds as a public health problem just as we regard tuberculosis and AIDS as public health problems. As a public health issue, education toward prevention becomes a priority.

Currently schools tend to create a prevention environment meant to cut the likelihood of the kind of extreme violence we saw in Columbine. The school then becomes a place where we lock young people in to keep the “bad” people out. Isn’t this kind of solution rather like washing your hands to get rid of colds? It’s a good idea and may cut down on the numbers of colds you contract, but ultimately it doesn’t rid us of the threat in a lasting way.

What if we were to ask whether there are messages in our society that actually sanction domestic and sexual violence? Dr. Gilligan suggests that one of the most powerful and damaging self-images he found consistently among violent men with whom he worked in prison was a sense of “shame.” For example, we are surrounded by messages that suggest that

“real” men are strong and tough, that “real men don’t cry.” Conversely, children and women are portrayed as possessions, trophies, and proof of masculinity. With such popular images doesn’t it make sense that many boys grow up to think of children and women as “less than” themselves? Think of the most hurtful taunts that can be hurled at boys and men – wimp, “fag,” “girly man.” These are the taunts that shame and turn men and boys into “losers.”

So what changes might we make if we were to approach violence as a public health problem rather than as a mandate for vengeance? Do we really believe that building bigger and better, more isolating prisons will enhance society and make us safe?

- Teach young people to treat everyone with respect even if you don’t agree with them.
- Teach young people to listen and try to put themselves in the place of the person with whom they have a dispute.
- Make parents aware of the power they have over children’s vision of themselves.
- Stop constructing human relationships in terms of dual thinking. There are not always winners and losers. Life is not a contest. Besides, no one wants to be seen as a loser.
- Stop pushing violence and killing as a viable solution to complex problems. I always used to ask my history students to tell me when wars end. The answer invariably was – when both sides sat down and talked.

We claim not to want “bullies” in our schools and communities. Yet, bullies use strong arm tactics and insults to exert their power over others. If we want to address our national violence problem, we have to abandon our national habit of bullying behavior. Children are not stupid. When adults say that threats and violence are wrong and then turn to threats and violence as their primary way of confronting people who challenge their power, we all notice. We now need to do something. ▲

¹ James Gilligan., Preventing Violence, (New York: Thames & Hudson, Inc., 2006)

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WHY PREVENTION EDUCATION IS SO IMPORTANT

Hilary Batchelor, Education Department



BECAUSE:

- Many adults are still amazed that Domestic Violence is so prevalent in Bennington.
 - Parents want to protect their children by not talking about harmful situations.
 - Parents cannot keep up with technology children have access to.
 - Children are at risk and need strategies at an early age to handle confusing and risky situations.
 - Children, teens and adults do not recognize unhealthy or abusive signs in relationships.
 - Harassment and bullying are accepted norms in schools and work settings.
- Being assertive is difficult for children.
 - The role of men in preventing sexual or domestic violence is minimal.
 - Reporting an incident is difficult at best.
 - Children do not recognize their supports.
 - Parents assume their children will come to them, but they don't realize the fear of hurting the parent or being judged is overwhelming for a child.
 - Children and parents still believe it is a stranger who is the perpetrator when statistically 98% of victims know their abuser.
 - "National statistics indicate one-fourth to one-third of women will suffer some form of domestic abuse."
 - Children are afraid and need to be empowered with knowledge.
 - Finally, we do not want our children to be the one out of four who is verbally, physically or sexually abused before the age of eighteen.

The Vermont Domestic Violence Network reported that "it provided assistance to 8,692 victims of domestic violence in 2006, up from 5,924 in 1997 almost 50%." (Vermont Public Radio report February 5, 2007). This is an outrageous rise and also increases the chances of abuse in our community. According to Senator Dick Sears, "Unless a serious beating or murder occurs, we kind of put it aside and don't talk about it (domestic and sexual violence) much. We talk about sex offenders or robberies or whatever else is the topic of the moment. It remains hidden in Vermont, and yet many people are living in fear." (Sears [Burlington Free Press](#), February 5th 2007)

I have been the PAVE Education Director for two years working with over 4000 children and teens, and I am surprised how much children do know, not as a result of parent or school information, but from the media and friends. Third graders watch CSI programs and imagine what they would do differently. They watch the news and look for ways to be safe. But many times they are misinformed. 'Stranger Danger' is a myth. Most predators familiarize themselves with the victims socially and develop a strategy over time. It might start with an act of kindness or letting vulnerable youth know they understand their difficulties. Manipulation is key in their approach.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Talk about 'it' (sexual and domestic abuse). Realize Vermont is not in a bubble.
- Accept that Bennington has more violence per capita than any other town in the state.
- Become informed about how you can stop the violence. Say something if you see violent or destructive behavior
- Recruit men who can be good role models for boys. Teach your sons that violence is not the only way to problem solve. Look at the Jackson Katz website for ideas.
- Teach your children safety habits. Be aware of resources that can help you and your family be safe.
- Identify their supports
- Open up communications with your children every day, not just one conversation, about the dangers of taking risks .
- Take the time to talk about what is happening in school and online.
- Find out what you can do if a friend or family member is in an unhealthy relationship.
- Play "what if" with your child.
- Make a plan with your children if someone were to approach them just as you would if there were a fire in your house.
- Learn what it means to be assertive.
- Teach your children how to express their feelings in a healthy way.
- Ask your schools what they are doing to reinforce safety strategies
- Be conscious of changing laws that effect our youth and the age of consensual sex
- Find out about stalking laws
- Gain knowledge of internet safety
- Don't be in denial about what young children are doing, talking about and experimenting with.
- Call your local domestic and sexual violence agency and have them speak at your workplace or organization.

Prevention is one possible solution. Adults and children do not have to tolerate negative behaviors. It is crucial that parents, educators and the community work together to decrease the violence in our culture. By not participating in the dialogue the violent conduct that we are seeing will continue to increase.▲

TECHNOLOGY AND SAFETY—PART II

Angela Bills, *Pave Advocate, BPD*

In the last issue, I wrote about internet safety and focused on the potential dangers of a particular website called *MySpace.com*. I described how we naively give up information about ourselves without regard to how that information can be used by a predator. Online communication, perhaps we should coin it “Interspeak”, and other popular technology can also present problems to the uninitiated. This article will look at the new online language.

There is a special language dedicated to on-line communication, a range of dialogue that you or I may not understand. Your children navigate chat rooms, for example, using the quickest way to write online, or to text message someone—a form of shorthand that the other person understands of course. If you or I were to try to monitor our children’s conversations, we would be miffed. I will give you a few to think about: *PM, asl, lol, p911, pos, wtgp?; lmirl, f2f*.

The use of technology is growing like wildfire! Think about what you are capable of doing with your cell phone.

- I know someone who took photos of all her colleagues with her new cell phone. Now she can download those to her computer, or she can just email them to herself or others to do with as they please.
- A recent case in law enforcement involved a young person who took a photo of a girl waiting for a bus as

another person pulled down her sweat pants. The photo was emailed all over the place; it was downloaded to a hand-held video game and shown to all the young girl’s friends and others. This prank sparked a horrible chain of events that led to this young girl being revictimized in several different ways by her peers in school and online.

- There was another recent case of a young girl and boy sending frequent text messages to each other. The content was sometimes inappropriate. One day, the young girl’s father had her cell phone when the young boy texted her some inappropriate messages. Of course, Dad saw them and was horrified. You can only imagine what happened from there.

These are just a few examples of how technology can be utilized. It’s amazing stuff but it can also be used to harm another person. When we give our children access to new technologies, we can’t always assume it is safe just because everyone uses it. Our knowledge about technology needs to include the fact that sometimes it can be utilized in ways that were not intended.

To take away the cell phones and the computers is not the answer—just ask your children. However, to be aware of the potential dangers of new technologies and to be proactive about preventing access to information that a predator will misuse is the answer. There are programs for monitoring what you and your children are doing, and for safety tips for parents and children to make them aware of safety issues. The *ISAFE* program is available to parents to provide them with tips, tools and advice

on how to talk to their children. Check out their website: www.isafe.org.

Doesn’t it make the most sense to COMMUNICATE what you know with your children?

- Talk about potential dangers.
- Discuss what you believe is private and what they believe is private.
- Agree on what will keep the family safe and what may put it at risk.
- Teach your children to **recognize** techniques used by predators to groom and deceive others.
- Teach your children to **refuse** all requests for personal information.
- Teach them to **respond** assertively.
- Teach them to **report** suspicious or dangerous contact that may make them and you uncomfortable.

Educate yourself and your children about the technology that you are using. If you were to buy an expensive stereo and surround sound system for your TV, you wouldn’t hand the remote to your child and say, “Have at it kiddo!” You would read the directions and have a “how to” session on how it works so that nothing happens to your new investment. Why not make the same effort with your cell phone purchase and your computer internet access. Learn the full capability of each piece of technology and pass it on.

Oh, yes, did you get the texting shorthand? *PM*: private message; *asl*: age/sex/location; *lol*: laugh out loud; *p911*: parent emergency/coming; *pos*: parent over shoulder; *wtgp*: want to go private; *lmirl*: lets meet in real life; *f2f*: face to face. ▲



Teen Dating Violence Awareness Week at MAUHS brought students out to pledge to respect the Dating Rights of their “valentine.” Healthy relationships are about trust, listening, honesty, caring, consent, two-way communication, support and equality.





PARENTING! *Christine Williams, Family Time Program Coordinator*

We just completed the second, 12-week Nurturing Parenting series. For some parents, “supervision” is the only way they will get to spend time with their children because of how they “parented” in the past. We find hope, when reflecting on the positive feedback from those involved, that the classes helped make the child-parent contact more positive.

The classes strongly focus on empathy, nurturing, and the impact of parental behavior on their children’s growth, development and sense of self. Each week, program activities and themes reinforce these skills and awareness and help parents gain insights about their parental role. Over time, parents become cognizant that the “policies, procedures, and rules” of *Family Time* are not only for safety but also in the “best interest of their child/dren.” Parents begin to understand that using their child/dren as a “tool,” or discussing “adult situations” or the “other parent” with the child/ren is divisive. It divides the loyalty of the child/dren and ultimately it hurts the child/dren and the parental relationship with the child/dren.

Not all parents who are involved with *Family Time*, or Supervised Visitation, are always going to be “supervised.” At some point it is likely that they will be “unsupervised.” This, then, is an opportunity for positive reinforcement....we don’t want to miss it.

One parent expressed how overwhelmed he was when it became apparent to him what his children had been through over the past several years. He went on to say that there was so much to learn that he didn’t want to leave at the end of each night’s session. Like other parents in the group, he wanted more and more information. Many of the parents truly believed that, if they had been able to take this class prior to their children being taken into state’s custody, they would not have lost their children.

Another parent, who started the class at the insistence of her social worker, amazingly asked for a reference to another parenting class where children could be included, as with the Nurturing Parenting model. Kelly Maitland, *Family Time* monitor and co-facilitator of the children’s portion of the program, sees the power behind having children involved in the classes. Kelly states, “The children are talking about the same subjects, at the same time as the other children who are in similar situations. They don’t have to feel alone as they face the shame, or take-on the responsibility of the separation of their family. The children don’t feel so alone.”

Kelly is amazed that the children looked forward to the classes. But she attributes this to the “hands-on” curriculum, which she believes allows the children to retain the information for longer. “For example,” she remarks, “when we talk about what nurturing is, they may be able to remember the poster we all made. Everyone placed an object on the poster to show what nurturing meant to them. We also made small cardboard people and placed sand paper on one side and soft fur on the other. The children will remember that the sand paper side represented how it feels when someone criticizes them, and the softer furry side represents praise, and how some times it is hard to accept praise, because of some of the feelings we may have from this.”

The Nurturing Parenting curriculum also teaches and focuses on all the different emotions, not only how to identify them, but also how to express them in ways that are healthy, not damaging to ourselves, to others, or our environment. Jean Howie, monitor and co-facilitator of the children’s portion, reflected that what was most impressive to her from working with the children, was that when questioned: “Is it okay to become angry?” every child replied “NO!” The children believed that this was a “bad” or “negative” emotion and that they “should not” get angry or express anger in any way. The class explains that it is normal, and virtually impossible not, to feel and/or express “anger.” This does not mean, however, that you lash out at others physically or verbally. This latter was the children’s association of “becoming angry.” At the end of the 12 week sessions, all of the children were able to answer: “Yes, it is okay to become angry.”

I expected the class to be a lecture type situation with a teacher or teachers who would speak “at, or too the class.” I did not expect to come and have fun while learning in such an interactive forum, where the “group” was encouraged to be involved in all discussions, role-plays, and learning. ~Comment by parent

This was the best class I had ever taken. I felt that this class was the reason that I got my child back into my home, from foster care.

~Comment by parent at the last class

childhood and experiences. This proves to be alarmingly scary due to the numbers of child abuse cases.” Steve also mentioned that after being involved with this class he really wonders why this (“parenting”) is not offered in schools at around 10th grade and up. He reflected that almost everyone will either be a parent, or in a role of responsibility to a child/dren.

Change doesn’t happen without acknowledgement, realization, and learning. We hope that some of the insight gained and tools practiced in class might bring about safer and healthier relationships between children and their parents. If nothing else, parents should understand that the principles they learned should be practiced not because someone is “supervising” them, but because their children are better for it. Steve concludes that how someone parents and behaves impacts the children, not only in the moment, but also in the future.

Finally, the words of participants show best how effective the classes are for them.▲

Finally, Steve Flynn, *Family Time* monitor and co-facilitator of the parent’s portion, sheds light on the Nurturing Parenting program’s importance. He states, “Parenting is the most important job in the world. Almost anyone in the world can have children, with little or no training beside what they take from their own personal

LETTERS FROM JAIL *Sandy Kelly, PAVE Advocate, Department of Corrections*

When a client of ours calls and states that she is receiving threatening letters from her abuser, I begin with the question: “Are you safe?” “Yes.” She is because he is in jail. But come to find out these letters are coming from JAIL. Why would any of us think that, just because the abuser has been sent to jail for quite some time, the victim is safe, and calm, and that her life can go back to normal? “Normal,” that word just doesn’t apply to her life any more. Offenders are desperate for control and are skilled manipulators. Why would anything change just because he is in jail? Why is he able to continue to contact her? Let’s peer into this gap.

A domestic assault is committed; the perpetrator has been arrested (his first offense); he is charged and placed on “conditions of release”—a list of requirements that the court has placed on the defendant. He needs to abide by these conditions until his court process has ended, either by plea or sentencing. Let’s say “our” offender gets the following conditions: that he show up to all court appearances, no alcohol, no contact with the victim, and a bail amount. He isn’t able to make bail so it’s off to jail.

But remember one of his conditions is no contact with the victim...but off to jail he goes and here is where things go wrong. The conditions that the judge ordered will now be temporarily suspended. Under the current system, what the judge orders has no authority in jail. Thus, the offender can now call and write the person that he has abused and been so desperate to control. The control and taunting continue from the jail cell. When an offender goes to jail for a domestic assault charge—either a misdemeanor or felony—he is able to contact that person whether she wants it or not.

The only way for her to stop this contact is for her to get a Relief From Abuse order (RFA). Sounds simple, right? Wrong, she has to apply for a hearing, telling and writing her story maybe for the second or third time. She has to write out the details of the abuse of this incident as well as others in the past. Then she has to possibly face her abuser once again at the court hearing.

With great concern, I see that obstacles to victim safety keep occurring. Our court system and our jail system need to be in sync so as not to re-victimize anyone who has been involved in such a terrible crime. ▲

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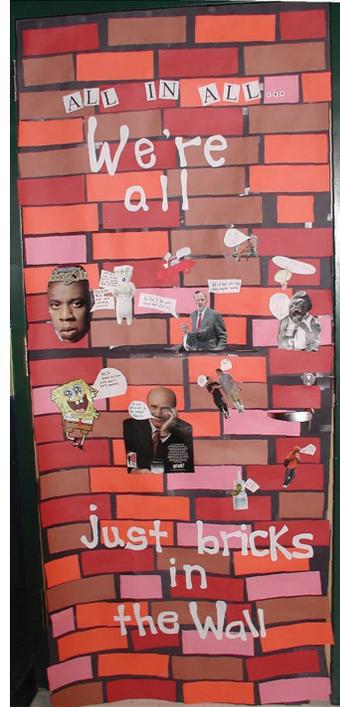
NO NAME CALLING WEEK took off at the Mount Anthony Union Middle School as students decorated their classroom doors to express thoughts about how to reduce and prevent antisocial behaviors. Students from Mount Anthony Union High School’s SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and GLOW-UP and PAVE educators went into 17 MAUMS advisories to participate in National *No Name Calling Week* activities. High school students performed role plays and discussed the harmful effects of name calling. The response from the middle school was undeniably positive. Students from the middle school said: “I wish it was longer than a week. There was a lot less name calling this week; it felt different and good.” Their efforts proved to be successful. Besides teaching empathy, activities highlighted the role of bystander and his or her responsibility to the target of name calling and to the bully. ▲



“LOVE”



“WE ARE ALL THE SAME ON THE INSIDE”



“WE ARE ALL JUST BRICKS IN THE WALL”



“KINDNESS INSPIRES KINDNESS”

CHALLENGES

Nancy Feinberg, Volunteer Coordinator

I have concerns about the recent sentencing of confessed child sex offender, Andrew James. I don't know the full story; I'm sure I never will because somehow the facts get buried. However, like the rest of us, I'm trying to piece together what I can from various news articles and from discussions I've heard. On January 20, 2007, the *Rutland Herald* wrote about James' violent history.

After so much outrage over the Judge Cashman decision in 2006 to forego jail time for a perpetrator in lieu of sex offender treatment, I assumed and expected that the outcome of any future cases would not be so controversial. However, I was wrong. Once again, a sentence came down that baffles the public—a plea bargain that replaces jail time with treatment. There are reasons, I hear.

Many think that to ask a child to testify at a criminal proceeding revictimizes the child. The child's testimony may be unreliable, others say. Court cases do drag on, get postponed, and take on a life of their own. A case's unrealistic time frame has the capability to revictimize a victim. I guess we are just plain lucky that James confessed so that we could get a conviction at all. I wonder, however, how the child will feel when he is older and learns a confessed predator got away without justice seemingly being served.

It feels wrong. One reason in particular is that years before, James confessed to not one but two crimes of domestic assault (the child was there to witness that, according to the *Herald* article). The two assault convictions came with a 6 to 12 month sentence and a 2 to 5 year sentence. All but 30 days jail time was suspended. Admittedly, for the first assault, he had to comply with "conditions" which ordered him to complete a batterers' intervention program. Batterers know how to "look good" and learn the "right" words to say. One week after the assault, his counselor sought a modification of conditions so that he could have contact with the victim because she wanted it. Does anyone else think this is unwise? I think we need to look at violent domestic crimes that get pled to simple assaults, violent criminals—those who break noses and blacken eyes, and treatment programs that are offered or ordered. Does treatment help and, if not, why not? According to the news report, James committed another violent act three years after treatment. The state had an opportunity twice before this recent case to demonstrate that it was serious about punishing criminals. Reducing a possible 5 year sentence to no more than 30 days doesn't appear fair to this lay person. I'm just sorry that we don't see a batterer for what he is. At a workshop I attended in Bennington, Lundy Bancroft pointed out that it can take years of accountability before a treatment can be deemed successful. We're dealing with a batterer. Should we really just take them at their word?

Recently, someone told me a joke that epitomizes the behavior of a batterer. Indulge me.

A scorpion asks a frog to take him across a river. The frog is alarmed. He knows what a scorpion is capable of doing. "Just let me ride on your back; I promise I won't sting you," the scorpion tells him. The frog agrees. Mid-river, the scorpion stings the frog. The frog looks at the scorpion and reminds him that he promised not to sting him. The scorpion responds. "You forgot. I'm a scorpion."

The whole horrible thing just does not equate. ▲

UNDERSTANDING TENANT

ISSUES Debby Stanlewicz, Transitional Housing

Advocate

As the Housing Advocate, I deal daily with many housing challenges from both victims of abuse and potential landlords. Both have rights, certainly, but questions arise regarding what information should and can be shared during the rental process. The victim is nervous about letting a current or potential landlord know about the abuse in her life. Will sharing that information jeopardize a tenancy? Does the landlord really have to know? This has different answers depending on the victim's circumstances.

Fortunately, when a landlord makes a referral for the victim to PAVE for support services, the landlord is generally supportive himself and fully aware of the situation. On the other hand, when a victim is out looking at a new apartment to start her life over, she may or may not want to share her personal information with the landlord. In that situation, I leave it up to the victim to disclose what she wants. However, if I am assisting her with our Transitional Program, the situation is different. The landlord is going to know that PAVE is helping her with rent. Therefore, I will go over with the victim prior to speaking with the landlord what information will actually be shared and then I will obtain permission to speak with the landlord. I do not go into details. Usually this is enough to quench the thirst of the landlord without giving too much information about the victim.

Landlords want to be reassured that, one, the rent will be paid; two, that their rental property will be taken care of and not damaged; and, three, that if there is a problem they can call the agency to assist them with talking to the victim. Sometimes there are additional questions: "Is the batterer going to show up at the door?", "Is he going to cause problems for other tenants?" These are questions that could be asked of any tenant not just victims of domestic violence. I cannot ensure what someone else's intentions are nor can I predict the future. We can, however, inform that a restraining order is in place or that the victim is working with us and has our support. But there are no promises.

Luckily, we have been able to work very successfully with many landlords within Bennington County. In fact, many have expressed their concern for a victim's safety but hadn't known what to do to help a victim. They have heard about abuse and its many forms, ranging from emotional, physical and sexual abuse, to adult survivors of child abuse, stalking, etc., but have never, knowingly, had to work with a victim before. They have questions about how to approach a new tenant and are glad that the victim has reached out for assistance.

Open lines of communication seem to be the best answer to address housing concerns between a tenant and landlord. This has worked well for many of our Transitional Housing clients. I hope that the landlords in the area will keep their mind open in extending their apartment rentals to victims so that they can start to rebuild safe and happy new homes. ▲

PAVE AWARDS SECOND CREATIVE HEALING SCHOLARSHIP

Linda Campbell, Assistant Director



I am pleased to announce that Wendy Ingraham is the recipient of PAVE's 2006 Creative Healing Scholarship.

Wendy was awarded a monetary scholarship of \$500. She chose to purchase a new computer with the funds. In her application, Wendy stated that she would use

her computer to write her way to healing her extensive history of sexual and domestic abuse. Having a computer will open the

door to healing on multiple levels for her. Besides writing she hopes to be able to find work or start a home business.

The Creative Healing Scholarship was created in 2005 from money earned from the sale of tote bags designed by two survivors who were served by PAVE. Each time a bag sold, the designers received a portion of the profit with the remaining money designated to fund the scholarship. After the first award, the PAVE board decided to award the scholarship on an annual basis to help move an individual along their own creative path to healing.

Thanks to the efforts of Sally Sugarman and other PAVE Board members the breadth of the scholarship has expanded. We now offer the possibility of taking an online course, a course at Southern Vermont College or Bennington College. The monetary value of the scholarship has increased to \$500.

The idea behind the scholarship is that the creative process helps individuals who experienced abuse heal through the arts. The first Creative Healing Scholarship was awarded to a survivor to help fund the self-publication of her book of poetry, "Touch Gently My Heart."▲

ORIGINAL WATERCOLOR By Ellen Viereck "Come On In!" A 1785 Shaftsbury Home 27" wide by 20" high

Tickets: 1 for \$5.00 / 3 for \$10.00.
Spring Fling Drawing: March 21st, 2007.

A portion of the proceeds will fund the
2007 Creative Healing Scholarship.

Tickets Available At: Bennington Bookshop,
South Street Café, and the PAVE Office



LOCAL ARTIST DONATES WATERCOLOR TO PAVE

Ellen Viereck, a North Bennington artist, has donated a watercolor for a raffle to benefit PAVE. A portion of the raffle proceeds will fund the 2007 Creative Healing Scholarship Award.

"Come On In!" a 1785 Shaftsbury home represents Ellen's attempts to capture the patterns of light on any interesting subject—human, still life, or the outdoors—her greatest fascination. She says, "Watercolor is always a challenge, never quite under control, and somewhat unpredictable."

Born in 1928 in Brookline, Massachusetts, Ellen grew up in Connecticut at the Thomas School run by her family in Rowayton. Her art training began there as her mother schooled her in a variety of mediums. At Vassar College, where she earned her BA, she continued in sculpture and art history.

Ellen and her husband spent a working honeymoon in Cordova, Alaska teaching Eskimos from 1949 to 1951. From there the couple settled in Vermont with their family in 1954. At first, she taught remedial reading privately and illustrated

children's books. The first book to be published was done in color as a joint master's degree with her husband, Philip.

Ellen returned to fulltime classroom teaching when all her children reached school age. Her last few years as an art teacher were spent at Catamount and Bennington Elementary schools.

She retired in 1987 to devote herself to teaching adults and painting full time. Ellen's interest led her in a new direction and involved considerable training at the Phoebe Flory School of Watercolors at Mt. Vernon, NH. Since then, she has studied with a number of watercolorists. One of the most important is Milford Zornes, with whom she has participated in workshops in Arizona, Utah, Cornwall, England and the Scilly Isles. Under Carlton Plummer, she participated in workshops in Maine and another in southwest Ireland.

Her greatest interest is outdoor landscape, but she still enjoys still life painting especially when the weather is bad. She belongs to a life drawing group that meets weekly. Currently, her work is on exhibit at the Bennington Center For the Arts – Bennington Artists show, Southwestern Vermont Medical Center's Hospital Gallery and Southern Vermont Art Center.▲

What do we live for, if it
is not to make life less
difficult for each other?
~ George Eliot

Board of Directors Paula Sherman President Hoosick Falls, NY Mary Kirkpatrick Treasurer Bennington, VT Susan Hoffman-Ogier Secretary Bennington, VT	Joyce Cowper Shaftsbury, VT Janet Groom East Arlington, VT Phylis Porio Shaftsbury, VT Alvin Schlesinger Dorset, VT Sally Sugarman Shaftsbury, VT	Mission Statement To end domestic violence and sexual assault and to provide supportive and educational services to individuals, families and the community.
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I want to help make this a safer community.

I have enclosed a tax-deductible check payable to PAVE. Please charge a donation to my credit card:

VISA Mastercard Exp. Date _____

Card # _____ \$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 Other

Name _____ Day Phone _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Contact PAVE to discuss volunteer opportunities. Thank you.. Mail to: PAVE, P.O. Box 227, Bennington VT 05201

We are grateful to the volunteers of R.S.V.P. who help assemble this newsletter.