

We, at Women in Black Apparel, are thankful we can share our passion for peace with such a highly regarded group of activists. We have met many determined, courageous, intelligent women from various parts of the globe. They have enlightened us on a variety of topics; namely, the power of females seeking peace in a male-dominated world.

We are Women in Black, Westminster (Maryland, USA); having had our inaugural stand on Nov. 29, 2002. The next day, we were on the front page of our local paper, *The Carroll County Times*. It was great to highlight the message Women in Black stand for. We were surprised by the hostile reactions induced by our images of Peace, during our stand. We have to admit, we didn't feel too safe, especially since my young daughter was there. Many rude gestures and insults were directed at us, as we stood in front of the public library on Main Street, in the bitter cold. Fortunately, the negative was offset by the positive feedback we also received.

At our fourth vigil, in February 2003, three police vehicles stopped with lights flashing. Six of us altogether, holding words of Peace. We were directed to put down our signs or be arrested for violating the permit law. What permit law? This is public property!...freedom of speech!...right to assemble!, etc. These parameters of the Constitution of the U.S., had to seek the approval of the Town Council! We put down our signs (after some protest) and flashed the peace sign with our hands. One activist was told to not point her finger at a concerned officer, because that could be interpreted as 'assault'. We stood the remaining time of our vigil, then contacted the American Civil Liberties Union on Monday. We threatened a lawsuit against the city (as a co-plaintiff) with the pro bono work of a large Baltimore law firm, and the great work of the A.C.L.U. of Maryland. The permit law was changed to allow gatherings of up to 25 people, and more can gather if all act responsibly. Yahoo! Our actions actually made a difference in our community!

We were indoctrinated into WIB through our friend Betsy, who founded the Baltimore- WIB network. We stood with her, and thousands of other activists along Charles Street in Baltimore, on 9/11/02; the one-year anniversary of the New York City, Twin Towers tragedy. Instead of seeking vengeance, as our government decreed, we chose to spread the message of Peace. Thousands of vehicles traveled along the 'Peace Path' as it came to be called; and it infused us with the exuberance of taking a stand for Peace. The 'Peace Path' is an annual event we always look forward to attending, coordinated by WIB-Baltimore. We continue to stand twice a month (the 2nd and last Saturday of the month), from 2-3pm; in front of Westminster's Public Library on Main Street.

Positive responses have increased in recent years, as more citizens have become enlightened about the horrific toll war has on the Global community, as well as its effects, locally. The Police have been known to acknowledge us with a wave or Peace sign, as they cruise by; quite a change since 2002. Wage Peace! Sylvia