

Alt-Hampshire Gazette

Read Globally, Act Locally

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| ANTI-ZIONIST NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2026 |

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

Mothers' & Others' Day 2026

By Claudia Lefko

*As men have often forsaken the plow and anvil at the summons of war;
Let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel.
Say firmly:*

*We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies.
Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause.
Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them
Of charity, mercy and patience.
We women of one country will be too tender of those of another country
to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.*

~ Julia Ward Howe,
Mothers' Day Proclamation, 1870

If there was ever a year to respond to the clarion call of Julia Ward Howe, it is surely this year. Genocide – the death of so many – continues in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank. Countless wars rage around the globe, destroying life along with life-supporting necessities: healthcare, agriculture, education, and government. Modern-day war that targets civilians and civilian infrastructures leaves mothers without children and children without mothers. Those who survive face the insurmountable task of restoration – of rebuilding everything from cultural institutions to social relations to university campuses to entire villages, towns, cities. And they must find a way to care for those who cannot care for themselves, including a way to parent orphaned children.

Mothers' Day is not necessarily about honoring mothers, but rather about honoring the work of courageous, activist women – mothers and non-mothers alike – of all women (and allies) who have organized and tried to sustain a movement since the early 1800's, who have struggled for peace and justice and against inequality, violence, racism, and war, and for the right to vote.

The mainstream culture/media calendar chooses to “honor and celebrate” the invisible, the overshadowed and ignored, by fragmenting us one from the other, dedicating a month each year to African-Americans in February and Women's History in March. Mother Earth gets one day in April and mothers one day in May. Mothers' Day 2026 seeks to reconnect and reignite our commitment to work across boundaries to put an end to war.

Dear friend,

River Valley for Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace W. MA, and other community organizations have tried to persuade the **Daily Hampshire Gazette** to improve its coverage of the Israeli/U.S. genocide in Gaza and occupation of Palestine but have not succeeded.

River Valley for Palestine offers this (alt)ernative paper containing material we hope you find interesting and helpful as you seek reliable news and opinion about the genocide and occupation, as well as local campaigns for Palestinian liberation and for all people fighting empire, colonization, white supremacy, and fascism at home and abroad.

River Valley for Palestine ~ rivervalley4palestine@gmail.com | althampshiregazette.com

Northampton Resident Blasts National Jewish Advocacy Lawsuit

On April 2, 2026, during the Northampton City Council's public comment period, Mark Rivich made the following statement regarding a lawsuit by the National Jewish Advocacy Center seeking to invalidate the **Resolution Calling For The City Of Northampton To Divest From Entities Complicit In Human Rights Violations In Israel And Palestine** (R-25.314). The Resolution was adopted unanimously by City Council in September of 2025. (See Jewish Voice for Peace W. MA statement opposing the lawsuit in edition #11–Alt-Hampshire Gazette on Facebook)

I'm Mark Rivich, Ward 2, member of Congregation B'nai Israel in Northampton. I want to thank the Council for passing the (divestment) resolution. It was reported that some members of my congregation met with the mayor to talk about the resolution and that they contended that members of the Jewish community were pained by this resolution.

I just want to make it clear that I and many, many Jews in the area and in the city are pained by what the Israeli government, in conjunction with the U.S. government, is doing in the destruction of Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Iran. Often, people in the Council and government will speak to representatives of the legacy Jewish organizations and I just want to be clear that they represent a particular point of view.

There is, if not a majority, at least a substantial part of the Jewish population, and if you include other progressives, a substantial number of people who support this resolution and hope that the Council, to the extent they get involved or give advice to the mayor, will be strong in maintaining it.

It's the councilors' task at times to meet with members of the Jewish community and hear their views, and I appreciate that and encourage that. But I just want you to be clear that in many of these meetings, is what people are talking about, is what they're really concerned about really antisemitism? Or are they actually trying to shut down discussion of the Israeli situation? Thank you

EDITORIAL - Amherst College Hosts Genocide Apologist Michael Oren

On April 30, 2026, the student organization 'Amherst for Israel' held a public event at Amherst College featuring Michael Oren (né Bornstein), former Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. and member of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). He fought in Israel's war on Lebanon in 1982, and “served” in Gaza in 2005 & 2008-2009. River Valley for Palestine member Jennifer Scarlott attended the event. She subsequently wrote the following letter to Amherst Dean Crystal Norwood, c'ing Amherst College President Michael Elliott and the Board of Trustees.

Dear Dean Norwood:

I am the person who stood, about 15 minutes or so into Michael Oren's Q&A this evening, to share with the audience my awareness that Mr. Oren is a genocidaire and my horror at his presence on your campus among your students.

After registering for the event, I received an email from you that included the following:

...We value respectful discourse and engagement. Free expression—including peaceful protest—is a vital part of the educational experience, and we are working to ensure a safe and secure environment for all attendees. We are grateful to be here together in the spirit of mutual respect, curiosity, and listening and learning from one another.

We remain committed to supporting students and fostering a campus environment where people feel respected, heard, and cared for. If you would like support before or after the event, we encourage you to reach out—we are available to talk, listen, and connect you with appropriate resources. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to cnorwood@amherst.edu.

Since you seem to be a sincere person and are in a position to educate young people about the adult world they will soon move into, I do find myself with questions for you.



Amherst College student group 'Amherst for Israel' hosts former Israeli ambassador & IDF soldier Michael Oren (in front of podium) for a public Q&A at Johnson Chapel, 4/30/26. Associate Dean of Students Crystal Norwood is speaking at the podium.

My interruption of Mr. Oren for a few moments was peaceful, if heated. Was it respectful? No. I intended it to be disruptive and challenging. I have read about Mr. Oren's activities in the past decades (including his fondness for making the rounds of U.S. college and university campuses), and know that not only has he not earned respect, he has earned – through his activities as an Israeli Ambassador to the United States, as a member of the Knesset, and as a member of the Israel “Defense” Forces (IDF) – a place before the International Criminal Court in the Hague. If there is justice in this world, one day, he will find himself there.

A few very sincere questions for you: how many Palestinian, Lebanese, Iranian, Syrian, and Yemeni students are attending Amherst College? How many people at Amherst College, in response to the question – *Is Israel committing a genocide in Gaza?* – would answer yes, and how many of them would be able to say that your hosting of Mr. Oren made them feel “respected, heard, and cared for”?

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Déjà Vu: Israel Smashes Global Sumud Flotilla and International Law

By Jennifer Scarlott

ACTION ALERT: Call U.S. Rep. Jim McGovern – (202) 225-6101. Request that he demand U.S. & international support for the Flotilla, publicly oppose the State Department*, and call for an arms embargo and sanctions on Israel.

On Wednesday night, April 29, Israel attacked a new humanitarian Flotilla in international waters near Crete, over 600 miles from Gaza. *Within hours, the U.S. State Department condemned the Gaza Flotilla as “pro-Hamas” and threatened any countries that provide assistance to it.

Since Israel accelerated its genocide in Gaza post-October 7, 2023, multiple flotillas have set sail. Last month, the largest ever, some 70 vessels, embarked from Barcelona and Marseille carrying tons of supplies and over 1,000 activists from 55 countries.

The Global Sumud Flotilla reported: “Tonight (April 29), the world is witnessing the export of the Israeli military's doctrine of engineered abandonment. In a violent raid in international waters, Israeli naval forces have intercepted, boarded, and systematically disabled various boats of the Flotilla. After smashing engines and destroying navigation arrays, the military retreated – leaving hundreds of civilians stranded on powerless, broken vessels in the path of an approaching storm. Communications have been jammed, severing their ability to coordinate or signal for help. While Flotilla participants face a calculated death trap at sea, the people of Gaza remain the primary targets of a relentless, years-long campaign of starvation and slaughter. The logic being deployed tonight is identical: the Israeli state creates the conditions for death, sabotages the means of survival, and then waits for ‘nature’ or ‘circumstance’ to finish the job.”

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MULTIPLE FLOTILLA PARTICIPANTS ASSAULTED BY ISRAELI FORCES OFF THE COAST OF GREECE WHILE TWO MEMBERS STILL ABDUCTED IN ISRAEL

Paki Wieland: Gumption for Humanity

By Nick Mottern

Paki Wieland was born in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1943, two years before the end of World War II and right before the next mass struggle of African-Americans against white supremacy in what would become known as the Civil Rights Era.

At that time, New Orleans boomed with war work, super-charging the city’s already high physical and spiritual energy of adventure created by the more than two centuries of the intermingling of French, Spanish, African, Indigenous, Caribbean, Creole, Cajun, Italian, German, and Irish people.

New Orleans was, and is, a place of powerful, easy, laid-back self-confidence. Perhaps it is because of the long-time profusion of live, public music, inspired by all these cultures, enabling communication and bonding among the souls of so many kinds of people, helping to create an unusual communal understanding and acceptance of the emotional realities of life and death.

At the same time, New Orleans of 1943 was also a U.S. Southern city of strict white - black Jim Crow apartheid, a violent system of thorough-going segregation enforced by a notoriously corrupt, all-white police force. This system did not find favor in Paki’s home, where use of the “N” word was forbidden. Her parents had friends across the color line, notably with an Indigenous family.

Paki and her brother were sent to Catholic schools, where, Paki said in an interview,* “There was always this learning about justice.” When she graduated from high school in 1961, the same year the school integrated, she decided to become a novice with the Dominican Sisters, entering St. Mary’s Dominican College in New Orleans. She intended to become a nun, she said, “to do the best thing that I could do, and that was the best thing that you could do.”

For Paki, this was a time of great enthusiasm and optimism, stimulated by the election of President John Kennedy, and for her, as a Catholic, Pope John the 23rd’s openness to liberation theology and his positioning of the Catholic hierarchy on the side of those most

exploited and abused by violent colonialism, globally and, of course, inside the U.S.

This was also a time of renewed interest in the deep ethnic musical roots of New Orleans jazz, expressed in the opening in 1961 of Preservation Hall, where Paki spent many hours with her friends listening to racially integrated bands, something extremely uncommon in the South at that time. Preservation Hall became important in the Civil Rights Movement and, thus, it became a target for police attempting to enforce segregation.

As Paki approached the time when she would decide whether to enter the Dominican sisterhood, an elderly nun gave her a copy of *Ebony* magazine containing an article about the extremes of white poverty in Appalachia. This inspired Paki to leave the Dominicans and to join a group called the Appalachian Volunteers, a War on Poverty organization funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity.

“If someone asks me to do something good,” Paki said, “I do it, if there is no compelling reason not to.” This, she said in an interview,* was a “core” policy for her.

In keeping with this policy, when the funding for the Volunteers dried up, Paki went to Washington, DC to participate in Resurrection City, erected in May 1968 in the wake of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr’s assassination to build pressure for federal law to provide assistance for impoverished people.

There she met a man from western Massachusetts whom she would soon marry at age 23. Shortly after they left Resurrection City, Paki gave birth to her daughter, Marcelle, who now lives in Conway, MA.

In the next 60 years, Paki’s core policy would draw her to become a social worker, teacher, and family therapist. She also worked on the staff of Clergy and Laity Concerned, fighting to stop the Viet Nam War. In 2016, Paki volunteered to be manager of the CODEPINK House in Washington, DC, a center for anti-war organizing, in response to the 2016 election of President Donald Trump. Responding to calls to support human rights and justice, Paki visited, among other places,



During a civil disobedience action at Northampton weapons-maker L3Harris, 4/29/26, Nick Mottern blocks a driveway while holding a photo of long-time western MA peace activist Paki Wieland, who passed away on March 12, 2026. (Photo: Clara Wagner)

Korea, Gaza, Pakistan, Bahrain, Standing Rock, and Enbridge’s Line 3 oil pipeline in Minnesota.

Leaving the CODEPINK House in 2020, she moved to Greenfield, MA, to be near Marcelle and because she found the politics and culture of western Massachusetts very appealing.

“I’ve just been very fortunate,” Paki said in the aforementioned interview, “that wherever I land it’s good fortune... just call me Forrest Gump.”

Paki’s last arrest, in a long history of nonviolent direct action, came in a March 19, 2025 occupation of the lobby of the Northampton plant of weapons-maker L3Harris Technologies, organized primarily because of L3’s profiteering from genocide. Although she was suffering from lung cancer,

Paki, charged with three others with trespassing and disturbing the peace, gave strong testimony at a Northampton court hearing that ended with the highly unusual finding of innocence based on what is known as the “necessity defense.” The cancer ended Paki’s 82-year earthly journey on March 12, 2026.

Nevertheless, Paki, a daughter of New Orleans in a highly spiritual, mystical sense, continues to be easily, confidently with us in the midst of the fight, smiling at us, embracing us, and encouraging us.

***Interview: “Paki Wieland with Nick Mottern and Jennifer Scarlott,” 7/31/25, Northampton Open Media, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0Ow-zwrlnw&t=1s**

Global Sumud Flotilla Continued...

Israeli commandos also abducted 175 activists from 22 Flotilla vessels on April 29, subjecting them to beatings on an Israeli frigate before releasing them to complicit Greek authorities. Palestinian human rights organizations Adalah and Al-Haq called Israel’s piracy a flagrant violation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and of the 2024 International Court of Justice measures regarding aid delivery.

Flotilla leaders Thiago Avila and Saif Abukeshek were abducted to Occupied Palestine. They are being interrogated and tortured. Despite no charges being brought, an Israeli court has twice extended their detention.

Israel has blockaded the Gaza coastline (Palestinian waters) since the early 1990s, intensifying the blockade in 2007. Beginning in 2010, flotillas of civilian vessels carrying humanitarian aid have sought to break Israel’s siege and demand the world’s attention to the dire conditions in Gaza. In 2010, Israeli commandos boarded a Turkish NGO vessel sailing in international waters toward Gaza (the Mavi Marmara), shooting to death 10 unarmed civilians and injuring dozens more.



In late April in Khan Younis, Gaza, a displaced man trying to anchor his tent for shelter uncovered human remains, accompanied by scraps of clothing and a mobile phone. Civil defense was notified and identified the remains as the father of journalist Mohammed Al-Haddad, ending more than two years of agonizing uncertainty over his fate. He had been executed before burial by Israeli forces.

Editorial Continued...

What is it, exactly, that I should have “curiosity” about in listening to this person who denies genocide even though experts and organizations specializing in international law and in genocide, including the United Nations, concur that Israel is indeed committing genocide in Gaza.

Mr. Oren explains away all criticism of Israel as antisemitism. He did so on your campus this evening. I hope that you, Dean Norwood, know that this is nonsense. I hope that you know that the conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism is itself antisemitic since it conflates Judaism with perpetration of genocide. How utterly shameful.

In your email, you offer support before or after the event if needed. I needed support before the event. Knowing for several days that I would be seeing and hearing Mr. Oren, even for a short time, made me feel unsafe, frightened. It made me feel ill. It made me think of the trauma I and so many have experienced over the past 900+ days of fighting for the rights of the Palestinian people and mourning the hundreds of thousands of innocents who have been slaughtered by Israel. (In fact, I have worked in solidarity with Palestinians in their struggle for liberation, for sovereignty, for equal human rights, for sheer human decency, for many years, hence my having to be in the same room as a man like Michael Oren was truly challenging.)

As a resident of western Massachusetts, I am deeply, deeply ashamed that Amherst College hosted Michael Oren. I say this as a lifelong believer in free speech. When a man who has served in the IDF in Lebanon and Gaza and defended Palestinian genocide and oppression in Washington D.C. sits in front of a largely admiring audience and claims that few Gazans have actually died there in the past 2+ years... this, you, your College, have made a mockery of honest inquiry and of the sacredness of the education of young people.

I urge you, as a Dean, to truly honor your Jewish students not by “hearing the point of view” of and giving a platform to a genocidal Zionist, but by helping your students to understand that everything that is beautiful and life-affirming about their faith is betrayed by the racist, settler-colonial political ideology of Zionism. If what I am saying is in any way opaque or challenging for you, you need to educate yourself.

Do better, Dean Norwood. Gaza is a laboratory. What is being done to the Palestinian people of Gaza will reach us all if we and institutions like Amherst College fail to stand against it and demand justice.

Do better.

Jennifer Scarlott
River Valley for Palestine, Northampton, MA

SAVE THE DATES

Mothers’ Day Event: Please join a **Saturday, May 9 Mothers’ & Others’ Day March & Gathering** in Northampton. Meet at 10:30 am, 33 Hawley Street/ March to First Churches, 129 Main St Info: iraqichildrensart@gmail.com

Paki Wieland Memorial: A Memorial Service for Paki Wieland will be held on **June 6, 2026 at 10:30 am** at First Churches, 129 Main St, Northampton MA

CONNECTING WITH PALESTINE IN WESTERN MA

- » See the W MA Coalition for Palestine calendar for local standouts & events: <https://tinyurl.com/4zxjetvc>
- » To sign up to receive weekly newsletters detailing action for Palestine, email to: W MA SURJ: westernmasssurj@gmail.com & JVP W MA: westernmass@jewishvoiceforpeace.com
- » Recommended reading & viewing: The Electronic Intifada, Mondoweiss, Drop Site News, Democracy Now!