



# VETERANS FOR PEACE NEWS

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL VETERANS FOR PEACE, CHAPTER 27

Veterans For Peace News is published quarterly by Mpls./St. Paul Veterans For Peace, Chapter 27.

Veterans For Peace works to increase awareness of the costs of war, restrain our government from intervening in the internal affairs of other nations, end the arms race, reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons, seek justice for veterans and victims of war, and abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

We pledge to use democratic and non-violent means to achieve our purpose.

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*"There won't be any trumpets blowing come the Judgement Day — on the bloody morning after, one tin soldier rides away..."*  
(Potter & Lambert)

## Tear down walls, build up people

by Mary McNellis

This past Armistice Day, Veterans for Peace led a bi-national march on both sides of the Arizona/Mexican border at Nogales to shine a light on our new administration's highly politicized "build the wall" and the humanitarian abuses of the U.S. Border Patrol. Scores of people gathered in front of adjacent stages, separated by a 30-foot fence that "protects" and separates the U.S. from Mexico, to protest a wasteful and inhumane policy.

It was a weekend filled with actions, sponsored by the School of America Watch (SOAW), founded in 1990 by Father Roy Bourgeois. This was in response to the Nov. 16, 1989, El Salvador massacre in which six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her teenage daughter were murdered. A U.S. Congressional Task Force reported that those responsible were trained in Ft. Benning, GA, at the notorious U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA) or, as some people have dubbed it, "School of Assassins." In an effort to disassociate the school with its horrific past, in January 2001 the SOA was renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC).

From its inception, the mission of this U.S. hosted and taxpayer-funded institute has been to train military personnel to protect the interests of multinational corporations and maintain the economic status quo for the few rich and powerful in the U.S. and their cohorts in Latin America, including military-style tac-



tics resulting in torture, assassinations, kidnappings and repression. Labor leaders, union organizers and environmentalists have always been among the primary targets of SOA violence. Many Americans remain unaware that their tax dollars are still funding SOA, under the guise of "defending our national interests." Since 1990, SOA Watch continues to say "BASTA! NOT IN OUR NAME!"

For 25 years, members of our local VFP attended every annual SOAW rally held at the front gate of Fort Benning, GA, to expose, denounce, and call for an end to U.S. state-sponsored terrorism and oppressive U.S. policies subverting self-determination and destabilization of democratically-elected governments.

Last year, SOAW moved the annual event, now called *Encuentro* at the Border, to the

**Encuentro, Continued on page 3**

## Notes from the President

by Dave Logsdon

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

*Margaret Mead*

Our group of committed thoughtful citizens at Veterans For Peace are doing our best to leverage our brand to effect meaningful change right here in Minnesota. There is a lot of on-the-job training that goes into all this community organizing stuff. With the right people and much imagination and networking, amazing things are possible; lives are touched, and things can change for the better. We are always trying to recruit new members and it can be frustrating trying to get people involved.

But in the past year we’ve had a small group of committed citizens joining our ranks. So many new people have made important contributions to our many varied efforts this year. Hopefully some of you reading this Newsletter will be inspired to join the struggle and, with the VFP National Convention coming here in August, we’ll need all hands on deck!

*“The World is my Country, all humankind are my brethren, to do good is my religion.”*

*Thomas Paine*

On Armistice Day (Nov. 11th) we had a full day and then some! We were invited to the Minnesota History Center on the closing day of their wonderful WWI exhibit to do our traditional bell ringing program. Steve McKeown, John Varone, and I spoke about why we ring our bells to honor the sacredness of the original idea of Armistice Day. It was a day of peace and remembrance, not a day of flag waving and guns firing. Our bell ringers came up and talked about the stories behind the bells they were ringing. Then we rang the bells 11 times at exactly 11 o’clock, 99 years after silence fell on the killing fields of France. John Varone sang the Phil Ochs song “I Ain’t-A-Marching Anymore” to end the program.

At St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, Larry Johnson was part of a morning program that concluded with Larry ringing his bell at 11 a.m. At St. Albert’s. This bell ringing

movement began at Ft. Snelling in the early 90s by a small group of thoughtful, committed VFP members, and now VFP Chapters around the country are following suit!

At 4 p.m. on the 11th, our chapter sponsored a documentary at St. Anthony Main called *The World is my Country* by Arthur Kanegis. The film chronicles the amazing life of Garry Davis, former Broadway performer who served as a bombardier that bombed Brandenberg in World War II. After seeing footage of the death and destruction that he was part of, he experienced a powerful change in his life. The film goes on to follow Garry as he creates the World Citizenship Movement using his imagination and performing talent to thrust himself onto the world stage. Arthur Kanegis was here for the film and also attended our History Center event. There is some wonderful vintage footage of the Kellogg-Briand signing and other historical events. We will screen this film again soon!

The Sisters of St. Joseph finished this full day with an evening of singing and reflection at their residence on the campus of St Catherine’s University. Roy Wolff of Veterans For Peace helped organize this event, with music by Joan Johnson and Bridget McDonald!

And.....on November 12th, Steve Mckeown drove to Fargo, North Dakota and spoke at Red River chapter member Ron Saeger’s First Unitarian Church on the topic “What does the American soldier defend?” Steve also presented the church with a Kellogg-Briand banner and was well received!

*“Seek not to contest evil, lest ye be taken by the spirit of contention, rather concern yourself with goodness, for in goodness is the leavening that makes the whole loaf rise.”*

*Leon Kenegis (Arthur Kanegis’ father)*

When the National VFP Board came here to conduct their annual business meeting and to find out about our convention plans, we had a meet and greet at our office (4200 Cedar). We had a nice evening of food, music and speakers. The next day one of the board members told me she felt that there was a lot of love between our members. Yes, we lovers here do quarrel at times, as lovers often do, but we do care deeply for one another.

This coming year come join us on the Peace Bus. After all, it’s a love thing!

## Encuentro, from page 1

U.S./Mexico border. It was again held in Nogales on both sides of the wall in Arizona and Sonora. It included vigils, concerts, workshops and the VFP March to the Border, calling for an end to U.S. policies that are the root causes of migration that have had devastating effects on asylum seekers and immigrants. SOAW and VFP stand in solidarity with border communities denouncing racist, military, political and economic U.S. policies that create the conditions responsible for the current refugee crisis.

SOAW founder Father Roy Bourgeois states: “We’ve been at this for 25 years before coming to the border last year. We realized it was time to continue to call for the closing of the school but to make a closer connection of solidarity with our country’s cruelty dealing with immigration.”

With the *Encuentro* now in its second year in Nogales, Father Roy said he was glad to see a younger crowd and more local participation than the group had last year. “We realized it was time for some of the leaders to pass the baton to our younger leaders, especially those with roots in Latin America. That’s where I’m feeling so hopeful and joyful, because it’s being implemented.”

After this year’s *Encuentro*, Father Roy wrote: “It was solidarity at its best! Our SOA Watch movement went once again to the U.S./Mexico border on November 10-12. People of all ages and backgrounds, from throughout the U.S. and Latin America, gathered in large numbers on both sides of a huge wall that separate us, a symbol of what the U.S. has done to the people of Latin America through its foreign policy for many years. It is rooted in racism, mili-



*Presente at the stage.*



*Father Roy Bourgeois speaking at Encuentro.*

tarism, and economic exploitation. In our struggle as activists, we have learned that where there is injustice, silence is complicity. Today, the lives and future of so many of our Latin American sisters and brothers are at stake, including our 800,000 DACA recipients. More than ever before, the voices, support and actions of everyone in our SOA Watch movement are needed. Let us build bridges, not walls! Hope not despair! Equality not discrimination!”

Many in the VFP organization were unhappy that the SOAW weekend fell this year on November 11, a day many chapters historically hold their own Armistice celebrations. Unlike last year, which seemed a surprise to most locals, this year’s *Encuentro* did not go unnoticed; the timing of the Veterans March to the Border became controversial. Even though neither the schedule nor the route of the VFP march coincided with the Nogales Veterans Day march, there were at least two local Vietnam-era veterans offended that Vets For Peace held a march on the same day as their annual Veterans Day parade. One local veteran staged a one-man counter-protest, holding up a U.S. flag and his own sign. “Veterans Day is reserved for honoring veterans who have served their country, regardless of the subject,” another Vietnam War veteran and local VFW member, 68-year old Raul “Ernie” Robles, was quoted as saying. He felt it was disrespectful and a slap in the face for VFP to have a march on November

**Encuentro, Continued on page 15**

## The problem with Burns/Novick's documentary The Vietnam War

by Barry Riesch

The war in Vietnam was a defining moment for me as it was for many. A tragic moment in our nation's history, it is a crime that we have still not acknowledged nor atoned for as a country.

I served with the 82nd Airborne and 199th Light Infantry Brigade in Vietnam 1969-70. My MOS (military occupational specialty) was 11C10 — mortorman. This meant I participated in the devastation of that country, something I am not proud of.

The war changed my life and dictated my life's focus for the past 40 years: trying to give meaning to the lives of my lost comrades and trying to stop further unnecessary military involvements. Our nation's unending wars show that my labors have not been fruitful.

My hope with the Burns/Novick documentary was that the myth of U.S. exceptionalism, the idea that America is unique because of our ideals of democracy and freedom, would finally be exposed. With this truth we could then apply it to today's military misadventures.

I was skeptical of the film and wondered if it could address hard truths while remaining acceptable to funders like David Koch and the Bank of America. I was right to be skeptical.

A claim made during the documentary was that the Vietnam War began and was fought "in good faith by decent people." Many do not accept that, and that story line leads away from accountability, justifies U.S. actions in Vietnam, and colors how the general audience views the content of the film.



The narrative of good intentions downplays hard truths that we must learn if we are to heal the wounds of this war and understand the motivations and folly of current U.S. wars that kill so many innocent civilians, devour our natural resources, pollute the planet and consume vast quantities of money. A partial list of these important truths includes:

**U.S. leaders, after World War II, chose to support French colonialism** rather than the Vietnamese freedom movement that had helped defeat the Japanese and whose declaration of independence was modeled after ours.

**The U.S. sought to expand its own sphere of influence in**

**Southeast Asia** after efforts to shore up French colonization failed, and did so by blocking elections we knew our preferred partners couldn't win and by imposing a series of unpopular dictatorships in South Vietnam (and throughout much of the so-called Third World). This was unmitigated self-interest writ large, not noble intentions undone by forces outside our control.

**U.S. leaders lied to the U.S. people** about the reasons for the war, prospects for victory, the nature of our allies in South Vietnam, and our enemies in the North and South. Many thousands of U.S. soldiers and millions of Vietnamese died at the hands of presidents and advisors who acknowledged to themselves that the war was unwinnable while lying to the American people about "light at the end of the tunnel." They did so to avoid admitting defeat, or to get reelected, or to preserve America's reputation for "effective" military violence and "American Exceptionalism" that were necessary for their pursuit of



*photos from the documentary The Vietnam War.*

broader imperial ambitions.

With all the damage done, the saddest truth of all is that the U.S. was a foreign invader that had absolutely no business interfering in Vietnam just as today our imperial ambitions lead us to invade and occupy Afghanistan and Iraq, spread our military bases throughout the world, and deploy special operations forces in more than 120 countries.

The film does a good job of not labeling individual soldiers as bad guys. Most participated because they believed in a government they thought actually cared about them. This caring has been disproved repeatedly with such matters as poisoning from agent orange.

David Koch and his allies are currently seeking to destroy the VA health care system prized by almost all veterans and replace it with a system based on, guess what, individual profit-making.

Scant mention was made in the film of the unsung heroes of the war: those who resisted, burned draft card files, left the country and did what they could to stop the horror of Vietnam.

Most of the peace movement honored veterans and wanted justice for them. However Burns/Novick, with a few notable exceptions, characterizes the peace movement as uninformed, chaotic, disrespectful, self-absorbed and violent. Learning lessons from the tragic truths named above could help us transform our nation from a permanent warfare state to a more humble country that is committed to jus-

tice and peace.

I do not want to cast the Burns/Novick documentary as having no value, because there is a wealth of good information laid out in a compelling way, much of which I was unaware of. There is an impressive amount of archival footage as well as interviews with Vietnamese soldiers. However, overlooked were all the civilians who were impacted the most by the war.

I can't imagine anyone coming away from this project without believing that the U.S. government lied to the American people and the troops and that it had no justifiable grounds for making war on the Vietnamese. I feel they did the best they could while staying true to their funders and making a film that many would view.

However, the way the story is presented continues the myth of U.S. Exceptionalism. Its tragic failure is its inability to hold anyone responsible for their actions. They have opened the door to further discussion. It is folks like myself and organizations like Veterans For Peace who need to tell the rest of the story.

*Please visit <http://www.vietnamfulldisclosure.org/> for more on efforts to cleanse the history of the Vietnam War and why this documentary fails to tell the truth of the war. Vietnam Full Disclosure is a project of Veterans For Peace.*

## It's all about the peace essay and telling your own story

by Larry Johnson

I spent most of my working life teaching young people to write, tell stories, and make video. Those skills are the best way to learn, because when you do the work to put something together to “tell” to someone else, you remember. That’s why I’m pleased to be able to have a major role in running the Leslie Reindl Peace Essay Contest, sponsored by MN Alliance of Peacemakers (MAP). VFP is one of 70 members of MAP, structured to create collaboration among Minnesota Peace and Justice groups.

The Peace Essay is a collaboration, seeking to encourage young people to think, strategize, and learn by putting their ideas together. This year students in grades 9-12 are asked to be part of some action, like a carefully crafted letter to a Congressperson, collecting signatures to end nuclear weapons, marching to stop “the Pipeline,” or stopping bullying at school. Then they write about it in such a way that someone else might be inspired to get involved. The deadline is May 15, and you can get full topics and guidelines information at [larryjvfp@gmail.com](mailto:larryjvfp@gmail.com), or [www.mapm.org](http://www.mapm.org).

On Sep. 16, VFP member Steve McKeown and I, along with Gail Hughes from Citizens for Global Solutions, did a workshop on the essay effort at the Nobel Peace Prize Forum. Most significantly, at the last minute, Lauren Wieber was able to join us. Lauren wrote the first place essay two years ago as a senior at Northfield High. She used her first place prize of \$1000 to partially fund a five-month service learning trip to the Dominican Republic. In the workshop Lauren said, “I believe everything I wrote, but it was mostly theory. Living in a country impoverished by war made all the difference. Now I really understand.”

On September 21 we travelled to Northfield to be a part of their International Peace Day Celebration.

Members of VFP rang Bells for Peace, and we formally announced this year’s Peace Essay Contest, aided by Lauren. Steve McKeown presented Kellogg Briand Pact banners to the mayor of Northfield, and to Al Montero, Frank Kellogg professor of International Relations at Carleton College. **They want us back.**

On October 1, Gerald Ganann, Steve Gates, and I did a show, SNAP, CRACKLE, AND STOP, at the Black Dog Café in St. Paul. Using storytelling, music, and art, we explored NONVIOLENT FORCES TO REPLACE THE KILLING OF WAR. After the show, which was a benefit for peace-essay scholarships, we learned that we need only \$900 more for this year’s awards. If you couldn’t be there,

but wish to contribute, you can mail a check made out to MAP, with PEACE ESSAY in the memo line, to MAP, Box 16396, St. Louis Park, MN, 55416.

Last year’s winners were awarded at WORLD STORY-TELLING DAY at Landmark Center. Because of the new May deadline, a later awards venue will be explored. However, save the date, March 20, as a time to inspire peace activism in the young people you know. Every year, on or around March 20, there are events listed in about 25 countries at [www.freewebs.com/worldstorytellingday/](http://www.freewebs.com/worldstorytellingday/), always with the inherent theme, IF I CAN HEAR YOUR STORY, IT’S HARDER FOR ME TO HATE YOU. World theme this year is WISE FOOLS, so our event will be THE FOOLS WHO DEMAND WE FOLLOW THE RULES. Because of the PBS VIETNAM series, our subtitle will be “EPISODE 11 – “Adherence to the Principles We Claim to Value Would Have Eliminated the War in Vietnam.” Storytellers will reflect upon personal connections to such principles as honest business (versus war profiteering), Geneva Conventions, Just War Theory, the Constitution, and spirituality via Martin Luther King’s Vietnam speech. Stay tuned.

### WORLD BEYOND WAR

VFP members Leah Bolger, Bruce Gagnon, and Paul Chappell are among the impressive International Speakers Bureau headed up by David Swanson.

It is worth CHECKING out and SUPPORTING this bureau.

[www.worldbeyondwar.org/speakers/](http://www.worldbeyondwar.org/speakers/)

### **Soldiers: Know Your Rights**

To Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan:  
You took an oath to uphold the Constitution,  
not to support policies that are illegal. The GI  
Hotline phone number is:

**1-800-394-9544**

## Mac students hear local vets on war experiences

by Ron Staff

VFP members Steve McKeown and I presented our stories of involvement with the American War in Vietnam to Professor Karin's class on Race, Place, and Space for the second year in a row at Macalester College in St. Paul. The hour-long class of 18 students heard our stories on the evening of Nov. 6th .

We were with them again on Nov. 18th for further discussions while touring Fort Snelling National Veterans Cemetery and Memorials at the State Capitol.

At the main entrance, Steve, Dave Logsdon, Barry Riesch and I rang bells 11 times to remind all who might hear of the ending of the "War to end all Wars," WWI. The desire for peace was the natural outgrowth in the aftermath of that great carnage. The war ended in 1918 and by 1928, the world celebrated again with the completion of the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war.

Peace was in such great demand that President Roosevelt knew there would need to be an attack on American forces before the country could be stampeded into another world war.

However, the forces in favor of war-profiteering are well organized and powerful. All the demeaning of "conspiracy theories" is not without benefit to some. Nor is it necessarily without benefit in helping one maintain an open mind towards filling in the blanks in our reported past. Where lack of clarity appears in our national story, one may cast about for likely benefactors to observe. Suspended judgement discomforts some who would like certainty, which hardly ever exists in our democratic process.

Seeking those things which facilitate narratives engendering fear provides windows into preparatory work, which has smoothed the avenue for gathering protection money.

How can the Department of Defense go wrong in maintaining a high degree of fear? But wasn't it fear alone, which President Roosevelt warned against? And one can thank him for that observation.

So we live in a democracy. One of the places in the human species space which attempts to move humans onward while seeking to preserve life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This form of governance has been wisely critiqued by Prime Minister Winston Churchill, as the worst form of governance imaginable while also acknowledging it as the best. Odd.

What are we to make of that and singer, songwriter Frank Zappa's observation, that politics is "the entertainment wing of the military-industrial complex?" Add in Will Rogers position that "the professional humorists are in Washington, D.C." and that he was a mere amateur in comparison.

So what is our democracy? The worst form of government known or the best? A mere entertainment department of the military-industrial complex? A comic show? Wow, talk about a low bar!

Other democratic social orders might be worth looking towards for instruction. Endless entertainment and/or deadly serious. Strange bedfellows. The college level "field trip" to Fort Snelling Cemetery and State Capitol preceded a review and summary at the Weyerhauser Chapel on campus. Four members of Veterans For Peace, all white males, were joined by two first-generation Vietnamese, Andrew Tran and Luyen Phan. Their perspectives added breath and depth to the war stories and made for valuable shared time.

Four hours on Saturday were worth the weekend time for all participants, students, immigrants, veterans and Professor Karin Aguilar-San Juan. Thanks to her for facilitating everyone's enrichment.

## National VFP Convention in Minnesota 2018

**Intercontinental Hotel in St. Paul, August 22- 26**

Volunteer help needed with convention tasks (registration, video, labor, etc)

Also, if you have housing available to host members and guests

(for those with limited funds)

**Contact Barry Reisch at [bwrvfp27@gmail.com](mailto:bwrvfp27@gmail.com) or 651-641-1087**

**or Penelope Gardner at [pennymae1948@gmail.com](mailto:pennymae1948@gmail.com)**

## National board meets locally to prepare for convention



*Members of the national board meet with local members to prepare for next summer's national convention in the Twin Cities.*

by Joan Johnson

On Oct. 27, 2017, Chap. 27 VFP Members and Associate Members gathered together with our WAMM friends to host National VFP board members and president at our headquarters in South Minneapolis.

The national group had been in the Twin Cities for a few days, holding their quarterly meeting, touring the August 2018 convention site, and meeting with Penny Gardner and the convention planning committee to iron out details for the big event. On this night, we conversed over pizza and tasty homemade salads, reconnecting with old VFP friends and making new ones.

Following the meal, Dave Logsdon gave the welcome and introductions. Our first speaker, Mitch Walking Elk, described his work at Guadalupe Alternative Programs school in St. Paul, where he spends weekdays working with indigenous youth in after-school programs.

One project he was excited to tell us about is a trip that he and 12 young people will be taking to Rome. In January 2018, they plan to meet with Vatican officials in a quest to

abolish all Papal Bulls, which negatively impact indigenous people around the world, he said. For example, the Papal Bull Doctrine of Discovery is still used today to take away and deny indigenous peoples' claims to lands in the U.S. and Canada. Our Chapter 27 treasurer John Varone presented Mitch Walking Elk with a \$2,000 check for that trip and meeting. Barry Reisch's church, Unity Church Unitarian, had donated the same amount. There is a GoFundMe page set up for others to donate as well.

Eskrit and Mitch each sang songs of protest, which were provocative and entertaining, to say the least! Mitch has a deep voice that commands attention and fills the room as he expressed the struggle for indigenous rights. Eskrit interjected humor and satire, as he sang and talked about the unfortunate truths of war, calling it "a tragedy for most, but a bonanza for the weapons industry." He bemoaned the good intentions of both Obama's Peace Prize and Ken Burns' Vietnam War documentary. (See review on page 4.) It brought to mind the quote, "The road to hell is paved with

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## *The peace index*

### Tax cuts for the wealthy, more money for DOD

I'm going to do this a little differently in this newsletter because the toxicity of politics has gotten to me. I have looked at various items that will probably lose funding as Republicans pass their "tax reform." And the process has been so toxic that I feel like I have to scrub my brain. Just a few of the items mentioned that are so distressing include:

**Make teachers pay more by eliminating the small deduction they can get for buying classroom supplies;**

**Make graduate students pay more in taxes;**

**Make anyone with a student loan pay more in taxes;**

**Make anyone who pays state and local taxes pay more;**

**Make health insurance unaffordable for over 10 million Americans;**

**Make those with preexisting conditions pay more;**

**Cut Medicare and Medicaid;**

**Eliminate subsidies for renewable energy but not for oil, gas or coal.**

*The New York Times* and NBC, after analyzing the tax bill being considered as this was written, concluded that it would save the Trump family over \$1 billion dollars.

And, of course, as this bill is being considered, the Children's Health Insurance Program that provides health insurance for children whose families make too much for Medicaid has lapsed and there is the possibility that millions of children will lose health coverage.

Meanwhile, the defense budget continues to grow. It looks like there will be about an \$80 billion increase for the Department of Defense budget next year.

A reporter for the online paper *The Intercept* wrote that the Defense Dept. increase over 10 years would almost wipeout all the student debt in the country. Or about \$50 billion of it could be used to make all public colleges and universities in the country tuition-free. Free tuition was part of Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign, an idea opposed by many Democrats and pundits as an unworkable and expensive fantasy, but just a small part of the defense budget could make such a significant difference in so many people's lives.

And it's worth pointing out here that the Senate passed the Defense budget 89-8, with only four Democrats voting against it. This is true bipartisan insanity.

So here's a couple things that we could do with \$80 bil-

lion that would make a difference in our country.

**The U.S. spends twice as much** subsidizing wealthy homeowners than it spends on Section 8 housing. This is because of the mortgage interest deduction on taxes. Wealthy homeowners receive about \$60 billion in aid, while help for the poor in Section 8 funds comes to about \$29 billion. Of that \$60 billion, \$10 billion goes to the wealthiest 1 percent.

According to *The Guardian*, ". . . only one in four Americans in need of rental housing actually receive it. The rental-assistance system is so overburdened that until recently, the city of Los Angeles had declined to even accept new applications for a voucher for a staggering 13 years, and New York's waitlist has been closed since 2009. When Los Angeles finally started accepting new applications again, for only two weeks in October, almost 200,000 people applied for only 20,000 spots on the waitlist."

**Trump's proposed budget** cuts the EPA budget by nearly a third. The EPA is responsible for cleaning up superfund sites, which include defense industry sites where bullets and armaments were made that resulted in heavy metal pollution.

Included is a \$120 million cut at the Hanford site in Washington, where two accidents have occurred in recent years. Those cuts are bad enough. But what tends to be ignored is funding for cleanup. Until 1992, underground nuclear tests took place in a 1,375-square-mile test site in western Nevada and created one of the most radiated places in the nation. It also polluted 1.6 trillion gallons of water. According to the *San Francisco Examiner*, "That is as much water as Nevada is allowed to withdraw from the Colorado River in 16 years - enough to fill a lake 300 miles long, a mile wide and 25 feet deep."

This underground water is moving, although very slowly, only a few feet a year. But clean underground water cannot be taken in that area, even though there is an increasing demand for it because of the possibility that the radiated water would move more quickly. And it is moving toward Las Vegas.

There is no budget for trying to clean this. Perhaps there is no way to clean it.

But the budget for these things is being cut. The wealthy are getting a tax cut. And the Defense Department is getting a great big raise.

# No war on North Korea

by Lucia Wilkes Smith

On Thursday, November 9, while peace activists rallied and bannered along Washington Ave. S., in the freezing cold air outside the Minneapolis office of Senator Amy Klobuchar, four of us entered the office to bring a clear message, “No U.S. War on North Korea,” to the Senator on behalf of the Minnesota Peace Action Coalition (MPAC). This activity was coordinated with the national week of actions held throughout the U.S.

Veterans For Peace, Chapter 27, was well-represented by Jay Kvale, Barry Riesch and Roy Wolff, along with me (WAMM – Women Against Military Madness). We sat in a conference room with Nicholas Kimball, Senior Policy Advisor and Counsel, in the Senator’s local office. Jacob Stokes, a Senior Policy Advisor for Senator Klobuchar with assignments in Defense, Veterans, and Trade, joined via speaker phone and led the conversation from the Washington, D.C., office. Stokes displayed significant knowledge and experience regarding Asia. His background includes working with former Vice President Joe Biden during negotiations in various Asian nations and the United Nations General Assembly.

We focused on Korea during introductions, questions and comments during the hour-long meeting. Specific personal experiences include Roy’s 16 months in the military based in Korea, 1955-1957, and at a peace conference in North Korea in 2003. Barry more recently traveled to JeJu Island, where Korean residents continue to resist yet another U.S. military base on their land.

According to Stokes, Sen. Klobuchar’s position stresses the importance of pressing North Koreans “to the negotiating table with strong, but steady, resolve” – not through tweets. The U.S. “should be the sober party in the negotiations.”

The Senator, according to Stokes, supports planning to martial the international community, Germany in particular, to participate in negotiations to prevent war and further nuclear proliferation. Her main points are that striking North Korea would have grave and catastrophic results, diplomacy is imperative, and the U.S. must support allies.

Roy asked about China’s role, and Stokes stated that China might have the most leverage with North Korea.

China has considered cutting off oil supplies that North Korea depends upon. China hesitates to use such drastic leverage because repercussions could include North Korea’s use of bombs and chemicals, resulting in countless thousands of refugees flooding into China. A unified Korean Peninsula may also be perceived by China as threatening because it would be allied with the U.S.

I asked Stokes to report whether Klobuchar supports either of two bills related to potential attacks against North Korea that are being considered by the Senate. Stokes explained that Klobuchar has not made a decision and is looking

*Sen. Klobuchar’s main points are that striking North Korea would have grave and catastrophic results, diplomacy is imperative, and the U.S. must support allies.*

closely at the bills, which may be intended to clarify exactly “who can authorize military force.” He differentiated the bills as attempts to take Congressional control of a “preventative strike” (S.2047) as opposed to a “preemptive strike” (S.2016).

The pragmatic view would envision either of these bills as putting the brakes on President Trump, introducing him to the basics of the Constitution and Separation of Powers. However, as Barry emphasized, peace activists must demand NO war, no matter which branch of government may call it legal.

Barry also raised the point that the U.S. military exercises off the coast of the Korean Peninsula are justifiably perceived by North Korea as intimidating and provocative. Barry added that North Korea seeks a peace treaty to end the Korean War rather than the armistice of 1953, which most Americans seem to think formally ended that war. Stokes agreed with Barry’s point, saying that he believes Kim Jong-un sees an incentive to perpetuate North Korea’s nuclear weapons program because he looks at the recent U.S. invasions of Libya and Iraq, both nations that lack nuclear weapons.

Jay stated his opinion that U.S. citizens may need to learn to live with these new threats just as we did during the Cold War. He raised the suggestion that the U.S. could enlist former President Jimmy Carter and past Secretary of Defense William Perry – both highly respected, even in North Korea – as Special Envoys to the area to take on peace negotiations. Stokes seemed interested in this original idea. Maybe our conversation with the Senator’s policy aides will have profound ramifications!

## A brief history of Korea, Japan, and the U.S.

Reprinted from David Swason's website [Davidswanson.org](http://Davidswanson.org)

### THE YANKEES OF THE FAR EAST

In 1614 Japan had cut itself off from the West, resulting in centuries of relative peace and prosperity and the blossoming of Japanese art and culture. In 1853 the U.S. Navy had forced Japan open to U.S. merchants, missionaries, and militarism. The Japanese studied the Americans' racism and adopted a strategy to deal with it. They sought to westernize themselves and present themselves as a separate race superior to the rest of the Asians. They became honorary Aryans. Lacking a single god or a god of conquest, they invented a divine emperor borrowing heavily from Christian tradition. They dressed and dined like Americans and sent their students to study in the United States. The Japanese were often referred to in the United States as the "Yankees of the Far East." In 1872 the U.S. military began training the Japanese in how to conquer other nations, with an eye on Taiwan. Charles LeGendre proposed a Monroe Doctrine for Asia, that is a Japanese policy of dominating Asia in the way that the United States dominated its hemisphere. Japan established a Bureau of Savage Affairs and invented new words like *koronii* (colony). Talk in Japan began to focus on the responsibility of the Japanese to civilize the savages. In 1873, Japan invaded Taiwan with U.S. military "advisors." And Korea was next.

### IT'S ALL KOREA'S FAULT

Korea and Japan had known nothing but peace for centuries. When the Japanese arrived with U.S. ships, wearing U.S. clothing, talking about their divine emperor, and proposing a treaty of "friendship," the Koreans thought the Japanese had lost their minds, and told them to get lost, knowing that China was there at Korea's back. But the Japanese talked China into allowing Korea to sign the treaty, without explaining to either the Chinese or Koreans what the treaty meant in its English translation. In 1894 Japan declared war on China, a war in which U.S. weapons carried the day. China gave up Taiwan and the Liaodong Peninsula, paid a large indemnity, declared Korea independent, and gave Japan the same commercial rights in China that the U.S. and European nations had. Japan was triumphant, until China persuaded Russia, France, and Germany to oppose Japanese ownership of Liaodong. Japan gave it up and Russia grabbed it. Japan felt betrayed by white Christians. In 1904, President Teddy Roosevelt was pleased with a Japanese surprise attack on Russian ships. As the Japanese again waged war on Asia as honorary Aryans, Roosevelt secretly and unconstitutionally cut deals with them, approving a Monroe Doctrine for Japan in Asia and handing Japan Korea as a *koronii*. Yet Roosevelt backed Russia's refusal to pay Japan a dime, and he refused to make his Monroe Doctrine for Japan public. Japan began to deeply resent its mentor. (Thank you to James Bradley for this story.)

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## No treaty from the forgotten war, and the humanitarian lie

by Steve McKeown

Easily the most used rationale for declining to sign our nuclear disarmament petition is because of "Rocket Man," that crazy little guy from North Korea. Few of these people have any understanding of how our country obliterated theirs. This has been pointed out by Korean vet and VFP member Roy Wolff in his many talks and writings after going back to South Korea in 1995 and North Korea in 2002. Most recently Roy spoke on a panel discussion at the U of M's Walter Mondale Law School about this. VFP member Barry Riesch pointed out last month at Senator Klobuchar's office that there is not and never was a Peace

Agreement ending the Korean War.

Even less known is that, in spite of pressure from our allies, the U.S. introduced nuclear-tipped weapons and missiles into South Korea in 1958. I

There are many instances of our arrogant country standing in the way of a Peace Treaty. But just as our deadly intervention in the Mideast is justified as being humanitarian, so is our demonizing "Rocket Man" seen as humanitarian. Trump has the two-faced pretense of being concerned about the enslavement of North Koreans while threatening to take them all out at the same time. This is the axis of evil. More than likely it is a strategy for support in our country's pivot to Asia to lock up China, but it is playing with a fire that may not be able to be extinguished once lit.

# Israeli censorship of the media in 2017

by Craig Wood

Freedom of the press suffers in Israel and so do those who work in the media. There were 310 violations committed against journalists during the first six months of 2017.

This includes the use of excessive force against reporters. So far this year at least 78 media people have been shot with live or rubber coated munitions, assaulted or tear gassed. In 2014 more reporters (along with media support staff) were killed in Israel than any country in the world except one, according to Reporters Without Borders.

Complaints from detained or harassed journalists are becoming increasingly common and so are reports of Israelis confiscating or damaging media equipment and materials. Journalists are often denied access to news sites or blocked while trying to interview sources. “National Security” and “Incitement” are the key rationales Israeli security forces use when they’re raiding homes or media offices to shut down communications.

Those critical of these tactics, along with the nebulous Israeli definitions of “National Security” and “Incitement,” believe that government is using guidelines from the 1945 British Mandate Defense (Emergency) Regulations as a canard to justify gag orders on journalists or, arrest and detain anyone posting dissenting comments on Facebook and Twitter.

Professor David Palumbo-Liu of Stanford University goes a step farther and points out the potential for Israeli censorship to go global.

He cautioned readers in a Salon news article last year that Israeli bureaus responsible for filtering content not only want social media to follow Israeli guidelines for publishing, but expects them to help monitor venues. Moreover, mainstream media including the *New York Times* have already deleted tweets the Israelis have determined to be unsuitable for print.

“How much will states like the U.S. comply with Israel when it involves the suppression and censorship of legitimate forms of dissent and protest? How much damage will be done to freedom of speech in the name of repressive state policies to which journalists and others might be asked to comply?” asks Prof. Palumbo-Liu.

And let’s not forget Israeli individuals who try to silence freedom of speech by suing dissenting journalists for a lot of money. The website Alternet reported in November that multimillionaire and former Israeli Defense

Forces (IDF) Commander Israel Ziv recently sued Israeli-Canadian journalist David Sheen for defamation after he wrote about Ziv’s relationship with South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit. Apparently, Sheen weighed in with a moral opinion about that relationship and hit a nerve about high-ranking Israelis involved with the selling of military technology and weapons to South Sudan. Attorneys for Ziv are asking for \$200,000.

Free speech would definitely take a hit if Israeli policies on news organizations were to become the global standard for the open exchange of ideas. Freedom House downgraded Israel from Free to Partly Free in their annual 2013 Freedom of the Press report, and the 2017 report placed Israel at #64 worldwide in terms of a free press. The U.S was ranked #33, just under Slovenia, but one up from Uruguay.

*Free speech would definitely take a hit if Israeli policies on news organizations were to become the global standard for the open exchange of ideas.*

Continuing on with efforts to restrict press coverage, the IDF raided the Palestinian media production company

PalMedia in late July and “seized media equipment and documents used for incitement,” according to an IDF spokesman. Media outlets such as the BBC, Russia Today, Lebanese al-Manar, al-Mayadeen, al-Quds and France 24 depend on PalMedia for broadcast services.

All of this was occurring about the same time the recently appointed Israeli Minister of Communications, Ayoub Kara, called a news conference to announce that his government planned to close the Al Jazeera (Al-Jaz) office in Jerusalem, stop recognizing their reporters’ press cards and put an end to AL-Jaz satellite and cable transmissions.

Add to that, there was no shortage of threats and attacks on journalists during the two week protests at the al-Aqsa mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem this summer. The Association for Civil Right in Israel reported that media personnel were not only denied entry into the Old City of Jerusalem, they were assaulted with weapons. International camera operators from Al Jazeera, RT and Reuters were also attacked while others complained about being forced to turn over footage.

As of Nov. 2, 2017, 28 Palestinian journalists were imprisoned in Israel. Six are doing time, 18 are awaiting trial and three are in still in custody without charges or a trial date.

Democracies around the world that would raise an eye-

Israeli censorship, Continued on page 14

## The choice of two maps

by Steve McKeown

The End War Committee from WAMM and VFP has been meeting with members of our Minnesota Congressional delegation to deliver signatures from around the state in support of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

As we go to press plans are being made locally to celebrate ICAN being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work. They have gotten 122 countries from around the world to sign a legally binding treaty to abolish nuclear weapons.

The celebration is taking place on Dec 10th, the day ICAN will receive this well-earned prize. Just recently Pope Francis has condemned the possession of these weapons, which also takes away the legitimacy of the nine countries that have them.

Both of these developments give real hope for nuclear disarmament, perhaps even more so than the thawing of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States when the Russian premier, Mikal Gorbachev, visited Minnesota. But it is a hope that requires the fortitude to proceed despite widespread apathy, fear, and acceptance of false security.

Our committee has a map of Minnesota with push pins on it, marking the towns and cities from our state whose residents have signed our petition to support the treaty (see accompanying article below). We will also have the commitments of our legislators on that map.

When we showed the map to Rep. Jason Lewis's office, I pointed out that although the rural areas did not have as many signatures, it would still represent more than would be

left if there were to be a nuclear war.

To be sure the Nuclear Pentagons of the world have their own map with an entirely different theme. The light we shed however small is an entirely different one than the light that flashed over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We ask your help in filling our map, which requires no great skill, but a lot of heart.

### Protecting Fargo from Pacifism

by Steve McKeown

Prior to speaking at Red River Valley VFP member Ron Saeger's First Unitarian Church in Fargo, Ron told me an interesting story about their church's history, which was built in 1892.

In 1919, the pacifist Max Eastman was scheduled to speak there. Upon hearing of this, a mob of local blue-bloods, including members of the National Guard, literally attacked the church. Eastman fled for his life in the back seat of a car with a cover over him.

The church was pretty much wrecked, and the Unitarians left. It was used for other purposes until they came back in the 70s. They purchased it again in the nineties.

It was a place I felt very welcome in. To learn more about this period I suggest going to the displays on the fourth floor of the Landmark Center in St Paul where the courtrooms still exist where trials relating to the (still existing) Espionage Act took place

### Towns with more than 20 nuclear disarmament signatures

The following is the number of signatures we have received in various towns across the state in support of nuclear disarmament. In all we have 9,232 signatures from about 300 towns and cities.

Apple Valley, 56; Anoka, 34; Blaine, 44; Bloomington, 224; Brooklyn Center, 35; Brooklyn Park, 64; Burnsville, 65; Columbia Heights, 20; Coon Rapids, 55; Crystal, 34; Duluth, 171; Eagan, 96; Eden Prairie, 79; Edina, 222; Faribault, 27; Fergus Falls, 21; Fridley, 37; Golden Valley, 59; Hopkins, 64; Inver Grove Heights, 26; Mankato, 102; Maple Grove, 41; Maplewood, 44; Minneapolis, 4000; Minnetonka, 115; New Brighton, 42; New Hope, 29; Northfield, 100; Plymouth, 62; Ramsey, 20; Richfield, 225; Robbinsdale, 34; Rochester, 36; Roseville, 89; St. Cloud, 42; St. Louis Park, 195; St. Paul, 1173; Sandstone, 34; Savage, 20; Shakopee, 26; South St. Paul, 23; Stillwater, 36; Woodbury, 35.

## National Board, from page 8

good intentions.”

Thankfully, VFP veterans and others concerned about exposing the truth of that war are speaking out about this film series.

Chapter 27 member Steve McKeown talked about how great it is that the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) recently won the Nobel Peace Prize, a very deserving organization. He talked about the ongoing petition campaign in Minnesota to abolish nuclear weapons, and described his laminated wall map with different colored pins showing the numbers and geographic location of petition signers. Expressing the desire to “have a signature from every town and city in Minnesota,” he also explained how he and WAMM members have met with the staff of senators and congress people in this effort to support the international treaty to abolish nuclear weapons. (See related article by Steve on page 13.)

After our traditional bell ringing ceremony, national president Barry Landendorf talked about his various meetings with different chapters and how encouraged he is to see the wonderful work they are doing throughout the country. He talked about the “Golden Rule” boat, built by Quakers in 1958, its recent restoration, and how it sails off the coast of California, with messages against nuclear weapons and war-

fare, just as the Quakers had done back in the 50s and 60s.

“We need to make it our priority work to abolish war and to abolish nuclear weapons,” he added.

National VFP Executive Director Michael McPherson thanked us for our willingness to host the 2018 convention, and stated, “When we reflect on what is happening in our country, it is a very difficult time, more than any of us have seen.”

Mitch Walking Elk had made similar statements earlier, adding “I’m glad to be standing in this moment with all of you, to respond to what is going on in the world.” The solidarity and unity was evident in that room, with folks from all across our country, all talking about the same goals, learning about each chapter’s activities/plans of action, and just realizing our cohesive heart-felt desire for a more just, peaceful world.

Personally, it was reassuring for me to hear all of these messages through speakers, singers and in conversation, especially in light of the negative news we are surrounded by each day. It was my “shelter from the storm” moment, and, as I contemplated the same thing happening on a much larger scale at our upcoming VFP convention in St. Paul this summer, I slept very soundly that night!

## Support Mayday Books

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Mayday Books has been a consistent and significant supporter of Chapter 27 for many years. The volunteer staff has provided help with mailings and has donated books for the use of our group. It is also a great place to drop in and have a cup of coffee and talk with whomever happens to be there and find that book you have been looking for.

**Hours: M-F noon to 7 p.m, Sat. noon to 6 p.m.**

## Israeli censorship, from from page 12

brow at these infractions of fair and civil behavior may need a crash course in Israeli politics. Lest they forget, journalists are dealing with a ruthless, apartheid regime that’s been denying Palestinian people their human rights for over half a century while continuing to steal their land and resources with impunity.

It shouldn’t be a surprise then when it comes to freedoms for the press; it means whatever Israel, the so-called “only democracy in the Middle East,” wants it to mean.

Nevertheless, the U.S. with its convoluted economic and militaristic motives continues to shovel taxpayer dollars into the Israeli economy. That amounted to \$3.1 billion dollars for 2017 alone, an amount that doesn’t include the \$600.7 million Congress recently authorized for an updated missile defense system designed to protect Israelis. This brings the total amount of U.S. foreign aid for Israel to \$3.7 billion or about \$10.1 million a day.

## My speeches in high schools

by Dick Foley

I have been very busy speaking in high school classes this fall. I love doing it, and look forward to every visit. The list is:

1. Cretin Derham Hall in St Paul as the anti-recruiter for two half days.
2. St. Paul Johnson, speaking to four separate sessions of Air Force ROTC classes that went well.
3. Highland Park in St. Paul, with two classes combined into one in their auditorium, speaking for one hour and taking question for one-half hour. Since I was on a stage with a fixed microphone, and the students had none, and they spoke softly it was hard to hear with my "artillery ears." I was thankful that fellow VFP member John McLeod was along to shout their very good questions to me.
4. Benilde St. Margaret's in St Louis Park consisting of two half days.
5. Christo Rey in the inner city of South Minneapolis for two classes that were combined into one. This school impressed me as it is essentially students from low income families who all go on to college.

The students were all courteous and attentive. Every school in which I have spoken at has invited me back, and I look forward to adding to my list.

What is really heartwarming is the stack of thank you notes and letters I receive back from the students. The whole experience continues to be a healing one for me also.

### EVENTS CALENDAR

#### ONGOING EVENTS

**4:30-5:30 pm** Weds. Lake Street/Marshal Ave. Bridge vigil. Note: time changes Nov. 1: 4:30 to 5:30.

Monthly meeting, 2nd Sun., 6:30 pm, 4200 Cedar Av. S.

#### UPCOMING VENTS

National VFP Convention, Aug. 22-26, 2018. See page 7.

World Storytelling Day, March 20. See article page 6.

## Encuentro, from page 3

11, "a national holiday that has been in existence since November 1918," he incorrectly added.

VFP member and Vietnam War veteran, Mike Tork, conceded that not all local veterans would see eye-to-eye with VFP, which celebrates Armistice Day (as it was originally called in 1918) on Nov. 11 to honor the end of all hostilities after World War I.

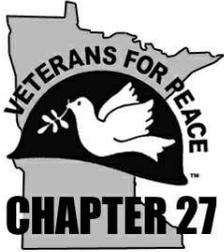
"SOA Watch is not looking to disrespect veterans," said Tork. "We want to recognize the struggle of all the people who have fought for peace. But also we want to recognize that all the wars the U.S. has started have been oppressive. VFP would love to see local veterans and other residents join the Border Encuentro, which aims to create a culture of peace."

Nogales Mayor John Doyle, also a Vietnam War vet, said he understands why SOAWatch and Veterans For Peace were marching and is glad to see veterans standing up for the rights of deported veterans on a day that is meant to honor everyone who has served their country.

For the 27th year in a row our local chapter was represented at this year's gathering, although only three members were able to make it because of the Armistice Day overlap. Saturday morning, before the Veterans March to the Border, VFP#27 members Steve Gates and Paul Baker rang bells 11 times and gave a presentation on why we ring bells on Armistice Day. Paul Baker was invited to perform on the main stage, singing about his adopted home, Nicaragua, and about his hero, folk-singer Victor Jara, who was brutally tortured and murdered for speaking truth to power under the Chilean Pinochet regime. We joined in the solemn *Presente* ceremony Sunday morning, which concluded the weekend.

Other weekend events included a rally at the Tucson courthouse on Friday followed by a rally outside the Eloy Detention Center to protest for-profit incarceration and inhumane treatment of immigrants.

An investigation by *The Arizona Republic* in 2016 found the center to have the highest number of deaths in the U.S. prison system. There have been 15 deaths since 2003 including five suicides. Workshops were held on a wide range of subjects Friday in Tucson and on both sides of the border Saturday. To learn more about these, please go to the SOAW website: [www.soaw.org/border/workshops-forums-2/](http://www.soaw.org/border/workshops-forums-2/).



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