



Spring 2018, volume XXII, issue 1

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)



Do not privatize VA medical care

by David Cooley
VFP Member, US Navy '69-'73, Vietnam '72

Why should we care if VA healthcare is saved or not? If you believe VA healthcare is responsible for stonewalling or denial of Agent Orange, PTSD, Gulf War Syndrome, wait-lines for care that lead to veteran deaths then you'd say to hell with it!

That would likely be confusing the causal agents, which typically would be the VBA (Veterans Benefit Administration), Congress's failure to fund or DOD not wanting any kind of linkage to its activities. Corporations such as Monsanto or Dow also do not want to be linked for liability reasons.

Certainly the VA has had problems with providing appropriate, timely care after the Vietnam War and again after 9/11. The VA was caught flatfooted, not ready for the aftermath of wars. This is nothing new from a government that thinks the conquered will pay for the cost of liberation and a citizenry that won't sacrifice by paying even a few more taxes.

And these problems have been hyped and demagogued in an effort to privatize VA

healthcare for private gain.

Let's briefly look at the 2014 Phoenix VA story of 40 veterans dying while awaiting care. About 400,000 people die in private care hospitals annually because of medical error, and there's no outrage. While at the VA, six vets died and the Inspector General could not conclusively find that "absence of timely care caused the deaths of these veterans."

This doesn't mean there was no scandal involving wait times. In 2011 the VA required strict public metrics that newly enrolled vets seeking a first, non-urgent care, primary care appointment not wait more than 14 days. Across the VA, wait times averaged 6.5 days.

Now, imagine 25,000 retired snowbird vets coming to the Phoenix VA for care. There, capacity constraints led some employees to try to meet the requirements by altering or destroying records, to make the wait times look shorter. This context gets lost in the media and politics that follow.

I recall driving towards the airport then and seeing a billboard that read: "VA

VA, Continued on page 3

Notes from the President

by Dave Logsdon

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

-Aesop

Sometimes, when you put out a whole bunch of small acts of kindness, you get a big, historic act of kindness! On March 18th, the culmination of many small acts of kindness, balancing schedules, building relationships, has resulted in a benefit concert that will send some amazing indigenous youth to the Vatican. Their mission: to talk to the Pope about abolishing once and for all the Papal Bulls that constitute the Doctrine of Discovery. Those Papal Bulls outline a set of moral parameters that gave permission to the conquerors of the New World to rape, plunder, and enslave the native inhabitants of those land.

Special thanks to the wonderful members of the First Universalist Church for their enthusiastic work hosting this event. A big shout out is in order to Mitch Walking Elk and his future Native leaders for keeping us all inspired. Last, but not least, my dear friend and fellow rider, Larry Long, who assembled an all-star group of singer/poets, including Strong Buffalo (Tom LeBlanc), Max Gail, Prudence Johnson, Dorene Day, Keith Secola, and Joe Savage, who all are giving generously of their time.

"In everyone's life, at some time, our inner flame goes out.

It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should be thankful for those that rekindle the inner spirit."

-Albert Schweitzer

kyong juhn is a Korean American photographer who lives in Rochester with her scientist/physician husband Young Juhn.

kyong will embark on a 323-mile walk in early May



Chapter president Dave Logsdon and the peace bus.

from Rochester to Pinewood, Minnesota, to mirror her parents walk from North Korea to South Korea. We plan on using our Peace Bus as a sag wagon to assist her along the way. We hope to have a Peace Celebration on the way in Kenyon, Minnesota, the home of Harold and Louise Nielsen who bequeathed a generous donation to our chapter for "a peace activity center." We hope to have a lot of "boots on the ground" to keep her company along the way! I'm headed to REI to get some new hiking shoes. How about you!

"Skating away, skating away, on the thin ice of a new day."

-Jethroe Tull

On a recent escape to San Diego, I had the privilege of sailing on **The Golden Rule**, the ongoing project of National Veterans For Peace. In the 1950s four Quaker activists attempted to sail into the United

States atomic bomb test area in the Marshall Islands to call attention to this environmental and moral misstep by our government. **They were detained before reaching their destination, but garnered enough attention that the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was signed.**

That very boat was rescued from the bottom of Humboldt Bay, California, and restored by some VFP members there. Its beautiful sails, with a peace sign on one and the Veterans For Peace logo on the other, can be seen at air shows up and down the Pacific coast!

The current plans are for a trans-Pacific journey to the Marshall Islands and then to Hiroshima! Donations to this amazing and powerful journey can be made at vfpgolden-ruleproject.org/donate.

VA, from page 1

Healthcare Kills Veterans.” This was a “CVA billboard.” The “Choice Program” came out of Phoenix. If your appointment is more than 30 days out or you are more than 40 miles from a clinic, you have to be offered private care. You don’t have to accept Choice. I personally have found it to be a disaster.

I almost don’t want to say the two words, Koch Brothers, being involved with their “vet front group,” CVA (Concerned Veterans of America). CVA will spend \$20 million this election in support of privatization, and the brothers will add \$400 million. **Certainly private health-care corporations are salivating, as is Wall Street, at the thought of up to nine million more patients with government benefits.** Primary care would stay with the VA because it’s not a money maker like specialties are.

But the reality of the VA healthcare is that there are 167 hospitals, 800 community-based out patient clinics and 300 VA Vet Centers and nursing homes and residential treatment centers. The VA employs 360,000 people, one third of whom are veterans. It has 35,000 to 45,000 frozen, unfilled job vacancies.

Service-connected, disabled vets have priority for care, and some veterans with low incomes can get care with adjustable copays. Not all vets are eligible for VA health care. DOD and Congress determine eligibility.

VA medicine has won Nobel Prizes, published thousands of research articles in scientific journals, helped develop the cardiac pacemaker, nicotine patch, the Shingles vaccine and many other breakthroughs. It also provides residency training to 65 percent of U.S. doctors. It developed the digital medical file. It is outcome-based, with fees set according to level of disability.

According to the Rand Corporation’s decade-long study

of the VA’s Integrated Healthcare based on patient outcomes, the VA equals or exceeds private care outcomes. *The New England Journal of Medicine* stated that VA quality of care is “significantly better” than private-sector Medicare. *The British Medical Journal* lauded the VA as offering “more equitable care, of higher quality, at comparable or lower cost than private-sector alternatives.” Non-VA veteran healthcare is estimated to cost the taxpayer 30 percent more than in-house VA care.

Aside from private care’s greed of wanting the cash from veteran’s healthcare, I believe those forces want to destroy it because it’s been a model for universal, integrated healthcare, even more so than Medicare. Today the news around privatization of the VA seems to change as rapidly as a certain Twitter account.

At present, VA Director Shulkin is fighting to keep his job, undermined by political appointees and is, apparently, looking to add to the privatization by removing much specialty care from the VA. There are three competing “VA reform bills before congress: the House bill HR. 4242/Rep. Roe/partisan; the Senate: (no #’s yet) The Caring For Our Veterans Act/Sen. J.Isakson/ bipartisan, The Veterans Community Care and Access Act/ Sen. J. Moran & McCain/CVA backed/partisan. We do not support these bills. All are looking to expand the Choice program. The Senator Isakson bill is the least bad.

Efforts to stem the tide of privatization are small compared to the forces working to push it forward, and most of the membership is unaware of what is going on, as I found out when speaking at recent DAV and VFW meetings.

Perhaps the best chance of holding back the tide is if the congress is flipped come November, though Democrats aren’t saints on this issue either. As individuals we have two options to work on if you choose.

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 or 651-641-1087
or Penelope Gardner at pennymae1948@gmail.com

The May 2018 Walk for Hope and Peace

by Larry Johnson
Past President, VFP Ch. 27

On May 5, kyong juhn, a Korean/American photographer, will take a 20-day walk from Rochester, where she lives, to the little town of Pinewood, just north of Bemidji.

Why Pinewood? Because it's north of her home in Rochester, and it is 323 miles, the distance kyong's mother once walked, from Pyongyang, North Korea, to Busan in the South, to escape the turmoil of the Korean War. Both kyong and her husband, Dr. Young Juhn, a scientist and physician at Mayo Clinic, have parents from North Korea.

The full title of kyong's project is "Walk for Hope and Peace: from 39.0221 N—35.1046 N to 44.0121 N—47.5972 N, 323."

Funded by the
Southeastern
Minnesota Arts
Council, kyong

wants to empower and inspire participants from diverse communities to envision art as a tool to extend their voice and imagination, perhaps, in paraphrasing John Lennon's words, "Maybe some day all will join her, and the world can live as one."

Kyong says, "My personal transformation has been from first generation immigrant and homemaker to an artist who expresses the complexities of social identities. It has made me sensitive to the current international politics, especially brewing tension among North and South Korea, and the U.S."

David Cooley introduced me to this brave young woman, perhaps because of my JFK 50 Mile Hike in 1961, and my 61st birthday 61 Mile Hike, calling for an end to war, and an end to arguing about veteran's care. I immediately alerted Robin Monahan, whom I got to know when he and his brother Laird walked across the U.S. in 2010. Robin and Laird, both Vietnam Veterans, walked to call attention to Move to Amend's work to end Big Money's control in our Democracy. Robin, now a good friend, walked with me one day on my 70th birthday, a "mere" 70-mile BEATING WEAPONS INTO WINDMILLS walk.

As I write, the winter Olympics in Korea have just ended. The worldwide competition began with a lavish ceremony of peace, harking back to the ancient Greek "Olympic Truce," calling for no war during the games so participants and spectators could travel to the athletic spectacle without fear they'd be attacked along the way or at the

host city itself. Olympic history carries many attempts at casting the worldwide competition as a means for nations to show their prowess athletically, not by military might. None of these ideas have gained much traction, and if not ignored, they're dismissed as foolish.

So, what if we addressed these "foolish" notions with the same level of financial resources, media attention, and person power, as we just put into hosting the Super Bowl here in Minneapolis, or the Olympics.

I thought I was done with long walks at age 70, but this is a call for all of us to get behind kyong's 323-mile "WALK FOR HOPE AND PEACE," and to find our own ways to "have her back" as she walks for all of us.

Most of the current tension, centered on Korea, is about nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, the Nobel Peace Prize was

given this year to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, for

their work on engineering the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Supported by a majority of countries in the world, it is also resisted by the nine nuclear countries, including the U.S. and North Korea.

In the midst of this, I stand by what I have believed for years, which the military taught me: that killing civilians is a war crime. The church's Just War Theory says the same thing, that it is a just war if no civilians are harmed. But you can't drop even a small bomb without killing civilians.

It is into this milieu that kyong juhn begins her walk, covering about 16 miles a day, and talking about the issues some evenings. She will have an information/sign-up table at our March 20 "WISDOM ON THE FOLLY OF WAR" story-telling event at Landmark Center. Even if you can't be there, you can start stepping up now to say, "I SUPPORT THIS EFFORT. I can walk on this day. I can drive a "sag wagon". I can provide a place to stay or a place to have an evening program, . . . OR I KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN." WALK ON, KYONG.

World Storytelling Day for Children

Saturday, March 24 • 10-11:30 am

Free Admission for kids of all ages (and their grown ups)

More information on page 12

Landmark Center, F.K. Weyerhaeuser Auditorium,
downtown St. Paul

The human costs of endless wars

by Michael Livingston

Professor of psychology and member of Minnesota Peace Action Coalition (MPAC)

Wars cost. The costs are many, varied, and difficult to count. And the costs are not cheap. But while it is hard to count the costs, it is not impossible.

One cost is of course monetary. Joseph Stiglitz (Nobel Prize in Economics) and Linda Bilmes (an economist at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government) estimated the cost of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars at \$3 trillion. Some of that money comes from future costs (health care for veterans and interest on the national debt) while other costs were direct. They concluded that the cost of these two wars damaged the U.S. economy as a whole.

Money is not the only "cost." The lives lost, the people injured, and the environments destroyed are also costs. And both sides pay the price. For instance, approximately 58,000 Americans were killed in the Vietnam War and a conservative estimate of three million Vietnamese were killed. Here, I wish to focus on the costs to U.S. veterans, those who survived the many wars the U.S. has fought.

The cost to veterans

As of 2016, there were over 18.5 million U.S. veterans. The oldest are from World War II, while the youngest are from the current Gulf Wars, a term used to refer to all the wars in the Middle East. (See Profile of Veterans: 2016, at www.va.gov/vetdata/Veterans_Population.asp.)

Veterans pay a price in both physical and mental health. Physically, vets often carry direct injuries to their bodies, such as traumatic brain injuries or a lost limb, but the physical injuries go beyond these. In Vietnam, a large number of U.S. personnel were exposed to Agent Orange, which can cause a variety of illnesses. In the Gulf Wars, troops have been exposed to Depleted Uranium (DU), linked to a variety of cancers and neurological diseases. And then of course there is post-traumatic stress disorder.

Few people know the history of PTSD. Soldiers in the Civil War were observed with the symptoms of what we now call PTSD, and the rate of PTSD was very high in World War I. At that time, PTSD was called war neurosis. While many military doctors claimed that the soldiers were making up the problems or were simply cowards, Freud described the symptoms of PTSD and correctly identified the cause: the psychological trauma of war. Freud and other therapists used psychotherapy to treat war neurosis. While they had only limited success, they did have some success.

After World War I, most governments and the medical establishment rejected the idea of war neurosis. After World War II, the Veterans Administration carried out extensive research on war neurosis and improved techniques to treat depression, anxiety disorders, and the other symptoms of PTSD without recognizing its existence as a separate mental illness. It was only in 1980 that PTSD was recognized as a real mental illness caused by war. **It would not have been recognized without the work of veterans' organizations.** The veterans' organizations essentially forced the medical establishment to acknowledge the research on the psychological consequences of war.

What is not widely known is that PTSD is linked to heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. The link between PTSD and these diseases may surprise you: it is sleep. PTSD makes it difficult to sleep on a regular basis. Lack of sleep raises blood pressure, damages your immune system, and has an adverse impact on your blood sugar.

When talking about costs, economists always bring up opportunity costs. Opportunity costs are the costs or values of what you give up when you select one alternative over another. The opportunity costs of war are great; for every war of intervention we give up schools, housing, education, and environmental protection. For veterans, the opportunity costs are equally great: mental and physical health, years of life, and quality of life.

Demonstrate on April 15!

Given the enormous costs of war, we need to educate, organize, and demonstrate against the endless U.S. wars. The Minnesota Peace Action Coalition (MPAC), of which Veterans for Peace was a founding member, is planning a demonstration on Sunday, April 15 at 1:30 p.m. (Please see the ad on page 15.) MPAC calls for the end to endless wars of intervention. The money spent on these wars must be spent on housing, education, the environment, and on taking care of the veterans who have fought in past wars. PLEASE JOIN US.

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/

Standing your ground

by Craig Wood

VFP Member, remodeling contractor and writer

Former Vice President of Veterans For Peace (VFP) Chapter 27 Mike Madden believes in protocol and is a stickler for details. He routinely intervenes at VFP meetings if discussions become chaotic and is not shy about reminding a hot-head about *Robert's Rules of Order*. So it came as a surprise to those who know him that he was arrested for failure to comply with a peace officer in January, 2017.

According to Madden, he was dropped off at the Minneapolis St. Paul airport by his wife to protest what he called an “unconstitutional immigration order issued by President Trump.” He believed the order unfairly targeted Muslims and backed up his position by citing the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. A jury in Hennepin County will hear the case this year on April 23.

Footage from airport security cameras show Madden arriving at 3:26 p.m. and heading for the “Freedom of Expression” booth located near the baggage claim area. He was too late to join an organized protest, which police estimated to be about 1,000 people. Police had already issued two orders to disperse, one at 3:21 and another at 3:23. Undaunted, he decided to have a solo protest and walked around the baggage area for about a quarter of an hour with a 12x14 inch “MUSLIMS WELCOME” sign he made at home with a magic marker.

He recalled East African airport employees silently mouthing “thank you” when he passed them. Others smiled or nodded their approval. Madden doesn't believe he impeded anyone or interfered with airport operations in anyway.

His solo vigil took him to the tram area of the airport where authorities were escorting the last dozen or so protesters off airport property. He stopped to observe where police had surrounded the protesters and says he was immediately told by law enforcement to join them. He tried to explain that he had just arrived and hadn't done anything wrong, only to be told he had to leave. He said his request to continue protesting on his own at a “Freedom of Expression Speech” booth was denied because he didn't have a permit. According to airport rules, he didn't need a permit, but Madden said he didn't know that at the time.

He never made it to the LRT station. When he stepped off the tram upstairs from the station he said he told the three law enforcement officers accompanying him he wanted to go back to the baggage claim area and get picked up where he'd been dropped off.

But his request was denied and was told by a police offi-



Mike Madden's arrest at the airport.

cer he could call for his ride at an LRT station outside of airport property. The criminal complaint alleges that Madden was employing dilatory tactics in expressing a desire to return to the terminal. At that point an officer placed a hand on his back and tried to steer him to the trains.

Madden's account differs from the arresting officer as to what happened next. According to Madden, he told the officer, “You're pushing me,” and the officer replied, “That's because you're not moving fast enough.” A few steps later Madden said, “You're still pushing me.” and recalls the officer saying, “If you don't keep moving you'll be arrested.” Madden said “If you do, I won't resist.” He was arrested without incident and cited for misdemeanor trespass.

Madden believes that refusing to surrender one's constitutional rights is not a crime. At his first court appearance a month later, his attorney, Jordan Kushner asked that the Failure to Comply charge be dismissed. The prosecutor responded by adding two additional misdemeanors, Trespass and Obstructing Legal Process. Kushner requested a formal written complaint. When the complaint arrived on March 20th, the three misdemeanors were gone, and replaced by a single charge, Criminal Trespass at a Critical Public Facility. A gross misdemeanor punishable by a \$3,000 fine and a year in jail.

Madden, a decidedly non-violent member of VFP for about 15 years, is no stranger to street protest. He's participated in at least 50 public demonstrations opposing pro-war politicians such as former Vice President Dick Cheney and supporting whistle-blowers like Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden. The former member of the U.S. Air

Force Reserve's 934th Tactical Airlift Group in the Twin Cities had never before been arrested before.

Madden believes he was lawfully exercising his First Amendment right and bringing awareness to an issue of national importance. Moreover, he feels he was unjustly treated and shouldn't have been lumped into another protest group that was ordered to vacate the premises before he even arrived at the airport.

"The police have a responsibility to keep order, but they also have a constitutional responsibility to uphold people's First Amendment rights. To accomplish both, they must act with particularity against those violating the rules, and not hold everybody responsible for the actions of a few individuals," Madden said.

Although one protester was arrested for blocking traffic and some chanted inside the airport, a police commander's report characterized the overall action as civil.

Madden's attorney, Jordan Kushner, believes Madden was arrested without legal justification. He told Twin Cities Pioneer Press newspaper columnist Ruben Rosario, "I think this arrest was completely ridiculous, absurd, and unnecessary and carried out by officers who simply wanted to show they were in control and arbitrarily abuse their authority."

Kushner later told me over the phone, "I think it's truly unfortunate that the airport is using so many resources and has caused so much hassle for an admirable citizen who was exercising his right to speak out." The attorney for the prosecution did return my phone call, but had no comment.

Through all this, Madden doesn't harbor resentments about what happened to him at the airport, but he does believe the prosecution has been overzealous to the point of intimidation and vindictiveness. In addition to upping the charges for refusing to plea, the prosecutor refused to provide the defense with a copy of airport rules regarding protests, forcing Kushner to file a Freedom of Information Act request outside of the court process.

He still plans on walking his talk though, even if it means submitting to arrest to defend civil liberties. "Because", according to Madden, "the rights to speech and assembly are powerful ways to enact change, and I plan to keep using them until I see America's actions align with its professed values."

**Were the founding fathers,
the creators of our
Constitution, legal
immigrants?**

Military Parade

by Ron Staff

Ole "Bone Spurs" wants a military parade.

Jes', if he'd just gone to boot camp, he might not be so enamored with "troop and stomp."

All the great nations have these parades for him to review, if he's in town. "The Shrub" got to land on an aircraft carrier and declare, "Mission accomplished!"

If the "current resident" brought the troops home from Afghanistan, he could claim something like that and have a "welcome home" parade. That might be a parade I could get behind.

But one would do well to have a reason.

The small towns in the country often have 4th of July parades, where politicians show up to schmooze the crowds. Go to one of those and bring a unit marching band. Couldn't that do it? Surely the Commander In Chief (CIC) could find a community, which would let him into their reviewing area.

The Marine Corps Band has lots of occasions to "show their stuff." Wouldn't that do? He could just have his chief of staff call down to the Marine Corps Barracks at 8th and I and ask about their next activity. Surely they would allow the CIC to review their performance.

And how big does this photo-op need to be? Without a "national need," who would pay? Bluster comes in for cost considerations at some point. Trump's parade is estimated to cost \$50 million! Do "we the people" foot the bill because an ego needs pampering? Such challenging concerns emerge from the "current clowns-in-charge."

Support Mayday Books

Find a wide range of books and periodicals at 15% off cover price. All the time!

301 Cedar Ave., West Bank
(downstairs under the bike shop)

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.

Will NRA money trump gun control again?

by Joan Johnson

After the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, FL, which took 17 precious young lives and injured 14 others, many of the surviving students, victims's families and other supporters have been working to challenge politicians to ACT NOW. They initiated and inspired school walk-outs across the country, attended town hall meetings, were interviewed on TV, held Capitol Hill sit-ins (and die-ins), and met with Trump.

They also went to the Florida state capital, where more than 100 survivors, along with thousands of others, made their voices heard loud and clear for sensible gun control legislation. One of those impassioned high school students, **Delaney Tarr, a senior at MSD, minced no words as she delivered students' collective message: "We've had enough of thoughts and prayers. If you supported us, you would have made changes long ago."**

Later, on Feb. 26th, a Florida state Senate committee approved a bill, but it wasn't what activists were demanding, which was a ban on assault-style rifles. While the bill does raise the gun-buying age from 18 to 21 and includes a three-day waiting period for purchases, it also allows teachers to carry guns (per each school district's approval). A gun ban was voted down 7-6.

Florida Republican U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, who has received \$3.3 million in NRA funding, argued against gun control at a town hall meeting as he spoke about assault weapons, saying, "It's not the loopholes --it's the problem that, once you start looking at how easy it is to get around

it, you'd literally have to ban every semi-automatic rifle," to which the town hall erupted into thunderous applause. At that same town hall meeting, Cameron Kasky, a student survivor, asked Rubio point blank "Can you tell me right now that you won't accept a single donation from the NRA?" Rubio defensively exclaimed, "That is the wrong question. People buy into MY agenda," which he loudly re-stated two more times.

A few days later, high school student tweeted that "the AR-15 should be called the Marco Rubio because they are both so easy to buy."

Immediately after the shooting incident, Trump put all his energy into blaming the FBI for spending too much time on the Russian probe and not following up on a tip about Cruz, the teen killer. He has talked a lot about the instability of this troubled young man and mental illness in general. He has also been promoting the arming of teachers as a "solution." But don't forget that he also signed a bill that allows mentally ill people to buy guns. Remember as well that the NRA spent over \$30 million on his 2016 campaign.

A quote from Joan Baez in her email to Laurel Krause (sister of 1970 Kent State victim Allison Krause) reads: "After the massacre at MSD High School, the powers that be have cleverly shifted the discussion to mental illness. **Hearing this, for a second, I thought they were talking about themselves. It made sense:** The congress people who are ready to sacrifice anyone's life so they can hang on

Gun Violence, Continued on page 14

Thoughts and Prayers and the NRA

by Joan Johnson

Brian Williams wrapped up his Feb. 15 news hour connecting the NRA and politicians who send out thoughts and prayers after any mass shooting. Here are examples he mentioned.:

Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) wrote that his heart "goes out to the victims and their families," but has accepted close to \$3 million from the NRA, including attack ads against his opponents.

Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) said, "Jane and I send our prayers to the school, the community and the victims." He has collected \$3 million from the NRA.

Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA), asked her followers to "please

join me in prayer for the students, faculty and staff" at the HS in Parkland, while receiving \$3.1 million in NRA support.

Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO) tweeted his "heartbreak" over the tragedy in Florida, but has benefited from almost \$4 million in NRA support.

Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) has received \$7.7 million from the NRA and had the audacity to join others in tweeting out his prayers.

Florida Governor Rick Scott spoke about what a senseless tragedy this is, and ordered the state's flags to be flown at half-mast. He has received an A+ rating from the NRA

VP Mike Pence, who tweeted about "heartache " and "prayers," enjoys an "A" rating from the NRA.

Military spending: help stop the madness

by Barry Riesch

Member VFP Chapter 27 and US Army, VN '69-'70

Had enough of a non-ending hole of Military Spending while more and more programs for the good of us all get cut? Divestment has proven successful with the Pipeline financiers, so now is time to hit our arms merchants where it hurts as well. Our Code Pink sisters have come up with a campaign for divesting from the war machine. Please see the information below, sign the pledge and encourage others to do likewise.

The full petition is at the website: www.divest-fromwarmachine.org/

BENEFIT CONCERT SUNDAY, MARCH 18

SEND FIRST NATION YOUTH & ELDERS TO THE VATICAN

1 pm: Refreshments and Silent Auction
2 - 4 pm: Concert, Introduction of First Nation Youth

They will discuss the trauma triggered by the Doctrine of Discovery. Youth are members of the Indigenous Youth Ceremonial Mentoring Society, a Guadalupe Alternative program in St. Paul coordinated by Mitch Walking Elk.

**First Universalist Church,
3400 Dupont Ave. S. Minneapolis 55408**

Questions? Call 612- 825-1701
\$20 pre-paid at
www.youthtothevatican.eventbrite.com,
\$25 at the door

Performers include Keith Secola and Joe Savage, Waubanewquay, Max Gail, Dorene Day, Prudence Johnson, Tom LeBlanc, Larry Long, Mitch Walking Elk

Hosted by First Universalist Environmental & Racial Justice Teams and Veterans for Peace, Minneapolis Ch. 27

The peace index U.S. spends \$250 million a day for war

by Frank Fuller

Newsletter editor

Each day of war costs Americans \$250 million.

DOD has reported that we have spent \$1.46 trillion on the Global War on Terror since September 11, 2001. That averages out to \$250 million a day over those 16 years.

These figures come from the DOD's *Cost of War* report. It only includes direct war costs, like the cost of bases and equipment, and paying for and feeding troops. It does not include veteran's benefits for troops who served in these wars or the intelligence community's expenses related to Global War on Terror.

Veterans benefits, also not included, will cost \$600 billion to \$1 trillion over the next 40 years. The only U.S. war that cost more was World War II, which cost \$4.1 trillion in today's dollars. The Vietnam War cost \$738 billion in today's dollars.

So what could we get for just one day of war if we were smart enough to choose to fix America instead of destroy other countries? Here are some suggestions.

One day of war will **feed almost four million children** in schools' breakfast, lunch and after school snack programs for one day.

About 2 ½ days of war would pay the total **costs of fighting all the forest fires in California last year**, including the devastating ones in the Northern California that destroyed many homes and communities.

Four days of war would pay the amount provided in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act currently being considered in Congress: **\$1 billion for addiction treatment and recovery programs**.

Overall, more Americans died of drug overdoses in just 2016 than were killed in the Vietnam War, and three quarters of those were opioid overdoses. The online news blog *Politico* reported that Congress previously had "approved bipartisan legislation in 2016 that authorized \$1 billion over two years for opioid crisis response grants to states, which was signed into law by Obama.

The first \$500 million was doled out last year. The rest is being held up in a larger fight over a bill to fund the government."

So in the last few years, the equivalent of two days of war has been spent to combat the opioid crisis.

Minnesota Representatives twiddle their thumbs

by Steve McKeown,
Vietnam veteran and VFP member

Our petition drive to support the International Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) took a break this winter but is now back on track with the arrival of spring. WAMM's End War Committee has taken the lead on this and VFP is part of that effort. As we go to press, we have 10,087 signatures from 326 towns and cities in Minnesota with our goal to have all of the over 850 of them represented to get our elected representatives to encourage all nuclear nations to support the Nobel Peace-prize winning ICAN. We have made great progress and the towns and cities with 20 more signatures on our petition are listed in the box on this page.

So far we have been able to meet with all our Congressional Delegations except two, and we have turned the petitions in to these offices. We will do so again later this year as this issue is becoming more important as our elected officials twiddle their thumbs.

In addition, many EWC members have been to precinct caucuses and introduced resolutions supporting this issue that passed unanimously. A number of us are also delegates to the District Conventions where we will petition and confront our reps again.

What follows are the results of our meetings with our state representatives.

1st District, Tim Walz (DFL) 507 388 2149. Both VFP and WAMM along with a number of peace groups from the Mankato area met with one of his staff months ago who said they would get back to us. Until recently Walz took money from the NRA and is now running for governor. His office has not gotten back to us.

2nd District, Jason Lewis (GOP) 651 846 2120. The EWC and some of his constituents met with his staff and turned in petitions. Lewis has since met with Coleen Rowley and Red Wing VFP chapter President Bill

Haberdink and essentially told Bill and Coleen what the Treaty is about. His main question was how do we get to the point of disarmament? As a former radio host he could use his talents to solicit nuclear nations to come to the table. His office has not responded to us.

3rd District, Erik Paulsen (GOP) 952 405 8510. Several of his constituents from the Peace Community met with him but received little or no commitment from him.

Some of these same people and the EWC met with his staff person and turned in petitions. They said they would get back to us but never did.

4th District, Betty McCollum (DFL) 651 224 9191. McCollum said that she is against nuclear weapons but has not communicated to us that she supports ICAN. She is a member of the House Armed Services Committee. When we turned in petitions and made our requests to her staff person, he said that her office does not receive many calls on this issue and that she would lose credibility on her committee if she were to bring it there. They said they would get back to us but never did.

5th District, Keith Ellison (DFL) 612 522 1212. In a room-packed meeting months ago, he told us that he was willing to have a public forum on ICAN. Looking at us and his staff person, he told us to contact his staff to arrange this. We

had a meeting with his staff person to discuss this further, but despite numerous requests over the months we have no commitment and very little response. The thumbs are really twiddling at this office especially, after the thousands of paper signatures from his District we have turned in.

6th District, Tom Emmer (GOP) 763 241 6848. EWC members and some of his constituents met with his staff person. We discussed the issue and turned in our petitions. This was months ago. Although we were promised a response we have not had one.

7th District, Collin Peterson (DFL) 320 235 1061. We have not met yet.

Towns with more than 20 signatures

Anoka-36; Apple Valley-63; Blaine-44; Bloomington-241; Brainard-39; Brooklyn Center-36; Brooklyn Park-67; Burnsville-77; Chanhassen-22; Chaska-30; Columbia Heights-22; Coon Rapids-56; Crystal-34; Duluth-179; Eagan-103; Eden Prairie-87; Edina-247; Fergus Falls-21; Fridley-38; Golden Valley-61; Hopkins-67; Inver Grove Heights-28; Lakeville-22; Little Falls-33; Maple Grove-46; Maplewood-49; Mankato-105; Minneapolis-4,312; Minnetonka-128; New Brighton-45; New Hope-29; Northfield-104; Plymouth-66; Ramsey-21; Richfield-275; Robbinsdale-34; Rochester-36; Roseville-92; St. Cloud-61; St. Louis Park-213; St. Paul-1,281; St. Peter-51; Sandstone-34; Savage-20; Shakopee-29; Shoreview-42; South St. Paul-25; Stillwater-37; Wayzata-22; West St. Paul-31; Woodbury-38.

Continued on next page

Stonewalk and the arrest of a stone of peace

by Ron Staff

It was 1999 and who knew what would happen when all the computers went to 2000? Would they make the change without a problem?

Barry Reisch and Ron Staff were joined by the ever-ready-to-act, Wayne Wittman, on August 5 in a non-stop run to Washington, D.C. We wanted to help deliver the headstone for "Unknown Civilians Killed In War" to Arlington National Cemetery. The headstone had been hand-pulled from Sherborn, Massachusetts as a project of the Peace Abbey then located there.

The Peace Abbey website describes the travel thusly: "On July 5, 1999, a team of people from The Peace Abbey took the one ton stone, mounted it on a 'caisson', a cart that was made just for this purpose, and pulled it 500 miles in 33 hot, summer days from Sherborn over hundreds of hills and severe, black asphalt to Arlington."

Evening, night and new day dawning driving got us there on time. We pulled onto the national mall just as the caisson arrived at the Capitol Building and we helped pull it the few additional blocks to the Lincoln Memorial for its overnight rest before the morning delivery to Arlington.

It had been scheduled to be donated to Arlington on August 6, the anniversary of the day the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and ushered in the nuclear age. We socialized with the crew, found overnight lodging at a Mennonite home, slept and **awoke to a day of seeing the headstone being arrested on the bridge into Arlington.**

The headstone has since been to the site of the former



Ron Staff, Barry Riesch and Wayne Wittman during Stonewalk at the Lincoln Memorial on August 5, 1999.

World Trade Center, pulled by the significant others of many who died that day. It has been to Japan, Ireland and England. Perhaps, someday our country will develop enough humility to bring it into Arlington National Cemetery in acknowledgement of its simple truth.

Someday on the atomic anniversaries, or the My Lai Massacre anniversary, or any of the indigenous peoples slaughter days, probably after white privilege has been fully extinguished from the body politic, the country will find the fortitude to do what is right. Then, Stonewalk will end.

Continued from previous page

8th District, Rick Nolan (DFL) 218 491 3131. We have not met yet

Senator Amy Klobuchar DFL 612 727 5220. We met with a veteran and military staff person. Besides discussing the issue, we reminded him of the more than 2,000 post-cards collected and sent by the EWC, and that we wanted a meeting directly with the Senator. He said that he would see what he could do. That was almost two months ago. Since then, I have spoken to him, and he hasn't brought it to her attention yet. He said (not her words) that she would probably want to pursue a "middle of the road" approach rather than the "extreme" position of ICAN. I responded that we would like her to use her considerable skills to bring the

nuclear nations to the table e. When I said we will be publicizing this and bringing it up at the Democratic Convention, he claimed that was political. So?

Senator Tina Smith (DFL) 651 221 1016. We had met previously with Franken's office, but hadn't received a response. Senator Smith has some of the same staff people, and the same location. We discussed the issue and turned in the petitions.

The phone numbers are there for a reason. You know what to do. Petitions are available from the WAMM office: 612 827 5364. Members from the EWC have spoken at many churches and community gatherings about this issue, and are are willing to do more.

World Storytelling Day 2018 • Saint Paul, MN

"If I can hear your story, it's harder for me to hate you."

Wise Fools: WISDOM ON THE FOLLY OF WAR

LANDMARK
CENTER

Hosted by Landmark Center, in partnership with Veterans for Peace



Tuesday, March 20 6-9pm

Landmark Center • F. K. Weyerhaeuser Auditorium

Free Admission

(Donations welcome to Veterans for Peace - for the August 90th Anniversary Honoring of the Kellogg/Briand Pact to outlaw war)

This year's global theme, "Wise Fools," is based on the ages-old fable which teaches that sometimes, those considered to be foolish, are the wisest among us. In the evening's stories, 'wise fools' will frequently be revealed as 'those who speak truth from the heart even in the face of popular opposition.' In the wake of the Burns/Novick, Vietnam documentary, the stories of this evening examine the war from multiple perspectives. The event is dedicated to Dr. Harry Skornia, founder of public broadcasting, and an ardent peace activist. Since 2003, World Storytelling Day events take place on or around March 20 in more than 25 countries around the world.

6:00pm Information Fair from our Program Partners

Information fair with Veterans for Peace, storytelling organizations, TPT, Minnesota Humanities Center, and member groups of Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers.

7:00pm Our Storytellers

LARRY JOHNSON: Host/organizer; served during Vietnam as unarmed medic. Past President of VFP and author of *SIXTY-ONE, 61 stories calling for less war, more walking, and no arguing on veteran care.*

ALLAN BOSTELMANN: An Infantry veteran, Al is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker Emeritus. A facilitator for Veteran Healing Memories workshops, he is articulate on what Just War Theory really says.

FATHER HARRY BURY: anti-war U of M Newman Center Priest in 60s, Bury was invited to 'Nam in 1971 by Vietnamese to help stop the war. He is author of *AN INVITATION TO THINK AND FEEL DIFFERENTLY.*

PHUOC THI MINH TRAN: An award-winning author, she was first Vietnamese immigrant to become librarian in Minnesota. She left her homeland as a "boat person," following the fear and despair after the 1975 Fall of Saigon.

CHANTE WOLF: An award-winning photographer, writer, artist, and educator, Chante served 12 years in the Air Force and Desert Storm in 1991. She is an activist with Women's Veteran Initiative.

JOHN VARONE: Vietnam Veteran, Lifelong Musician, and former national VFP board member. He is an honorary member of the Mendota Dakota Community, leader of veteran flag carrying at Pow Wow.

NOTHANDO ZULU: Founder/Director of Black Storytellers Alliance, she is a lifelong political activist, living Dr. King's truth that we'll never solve poverty and racism by spending money sending our youth to kill poor people overseas.

Peacestock 2018

by Bill Habedank
Executive director, Veterans for Peace 115

The 16th annual Peacestock will take place on Saturday, July 14th. Our theme this year will be "American Empire: Who Benefits, Who Suffers," a very good topic as the United States continues to add to the Pentagon budget year after year with barely any discussion in Congress.

Our keynote speaker will be Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Code Pink. Medea has seen firsthand the results of American Empire and will speak very knowledgeably on this topic. We are working on another speaker who can speak to this as well. As soon as more planning comes into play, the Peacestock website (www.peacestockvfp.org) will be updated with that information.

We always have music to entertain us, and the Bonnie and the Clydes are coming back for an encore performance with great anticipation both for them and for attendees.

An evening meal will again be provided, and the Fox Wagon will be there for the morning and noon hour. Owner Joan Wood promises she will make more cucumber salad this year!

Ticket prices remain the same: \$30 per individual and \$15 for students. But no one will be denied entry for inability to pay. We feel this remains a good bargain for an all-day event that includes supper.

For further information, contact me at 651-764-1866 or email whabedank@yahoo.com. Or contact VFP Chapter 27 at 612-821-9141. See you there!

Update on nuclear disarmament legislation

by Steve McKeown

Three Minnesota State Democratic Senators have introduced a resolution calling for the U S to "pull back from the brink of" and prevent nuclear war. This resolution is in support of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons that VFP and WAMM have been working on. As we go to press, we have scheduled a meeting with Sen. John Marty of Roseville, one of the resolution's sponsors, along with Sandy Pappas of St Paul and Scott Dibble of Minneapolis. The resolution is now in the Judicial and Safety Committee. Calls in support WOULD BE VERY WELCOME. We are glad for this good news and look forward to working with them.

Significant events from 50 years ago

compiled by Barry Riesch

January 30th: Tet Offensive. This attack by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong on U.S. and South Vietnamese militaries shook public support of war and ushered in the tumultuous events of 1968.

February 27: Walter Cronkite, the CBS News anchor, billed as the nation's most trustworthy voice, told his audience of millions that the war could not be won. Commentary like this was remarkable back then because of both custom and the Fairness Doctrine, a federal policy requiring broadcasters to remain neutral about the great questions of the day.

March 16: My Lai massacre. Between 347 and 504 villagers in the hamlet of My Lai are massacred by members of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry U.S. Army, while participating in an airborne assault against suspected NLF encampments in Quang Nga Province. Upon entering My Lai and finding no NLF, the Americans begin killing every civilian in sight, interrupted only by helicopter pilot Hugh Thompson (Hugh featured speaker and presented an award at VFP National convention in Minneapolis, MN).

March 31: President Johnson surprisingly decides not to seek re-election. He also announces a partial bombing halt and urges Hanoi to begin peace talks. "We are prepared to move immediately toward peace through negotiations." As a result, peace talks soon begin. The bombing halt only affects targets north of the 20th parallel, including Hanoi.

April 4: Martin Luther King was assassinated while standing on a balcony outside his second-floor room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. News of King's assassination prompted major outbreaks of racial violence, resulting in more than 40 deaths nationwide and extensive property damage. King gave his "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" speech, also referred to as his Riverside Church speech, an anti-Vietnam War and pro-social justice speech delivered on April 4, 1967, exactly one year before he was assassinated.

VFP planning international veteran's conference at UN

by Barry Ladendorf

Immediate Past President, Board of Directors
Veterans For Peace

VFP has been a Non-Governmental Organization registered with the United Nations since 1991, which has allowed us to enhance our status and advance our mission.

On December 6, 2016, representatives of VFP met with Bruce Knotts, Executive Director of the Department of Public Information at the UN, to detail our plan to host an international veterans conference that would focus on three areas of importance to the UN: first, **the abolition of war as an instrument of national policy**; second, a call for **abolishing nuclear weapons** and support for the UN Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons, and third, exposing the damage to our environment caused by war and the preparation for war.

Mr. Knotts enthusiastically supported VFP's proposal, commenting it was "spot on" with the goals of the UN.

We needed a UN member to sponsor this event, and the Republic of Kiribati has agreed to sponsor it. We hope to hold the conference November 13-15, 2018 in New York City.

It is our hope that this conference will allow the voice of veterans to be heard on the above issues, give voice to their collective experience that war is not the answer, and make the voice of VETERANS resound among the representatives of UN member nations.

This conference will also be a great capstone to recognize the 100-year anniversary of World War I and a chance to advance the importance of the Kellogg-Briand Treaty.

EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

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

Monthly meeting, 2nd Sun., 6:00 pm, 4200 Cedar Av. S.

UPCOMING VENTS

March 18, 1-4 pm, Protect the Sacred Concert, 1st Universalist Church, 3400 Dupont, Mpls.

March 20, 6 pm, National Story Telling Day, Landmark Center St Paul (see ad on page page 12)

March 24, National School Walkout Against Assault Weapons and Gun Violence. Coming to a school near you (and in Washington DC).

April 5, 1-3 pm, MN Twins Home Opener. Petitioning and flyering Target Field, FFI: 612 869 2040

April 15, 1:30 pm. Stop Endless Wars, Hennepin and Lagoon, Mpls. (See page 15 and article on page 5.)

April 20, National student walk-out day. (Columbine shooting anniversary.)

May 6, 323-mile Walk for Peace starting at Rochester, Mn. (See articles on pages 2 and 4.)

May 6, May Day Parade. Gather at noon at Cedar Field. VFP will march in our usual spot.

FFI Barry Riesch bwrvp27@gmail.com

May 28, Memorial Day, 9:30 am. VFP will hold Memorial Day Service on the State Capitol grounds alongside the Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

FFI Barry Riesch bwrvp27@gmail.com.

June 2, 10:30 am, WAMM's 11th Annual Walk Against Weapons. Starts at Perkins Restaurant near Riverside and I-94, Mpls.

July 14 Peacestock, Red Wing with Medea Benjamin from Code Pink (see article on page 13)

Aug 23-26, National VFP Convention, International Hotel, St Paul.

Gun violence, from page 8

to their jobs - that's mental illness."

There is huge momentum building, and our young people are at the forefront of this national gun control conversation and movement. We need to jump in and support them in every way possible.

Spearheaded by "Women's March Youth Empower," a school walk-out is being planned for March 14 to confront

the inaction by Congress. As of this writing, schools in St. Paul, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Apple Valley, Osseo, St. Peter, Northfield, and Winona plan to participate.

On March 24th, a "March for Our Lives" protest in Washington, DC and locally will take place, and another nation-wide student walk-out is in the works for April 20th, the 19th anniversary of the Columbine school shootings.

2018 National Spring Anti-War Actions

Stop Endless U.S. Wars

Afghanistan

Syria

Iraq

Somalia

Yemen

Pakistan

Libya



No U.S. War on North Korea

No New Wars & Interventions

**Hands off Venezuela, Iran, Philippines,
Honduras & Everywhere**

Dismantle U.S. nuclear weapons

**Funds for housing, education,
& the environment, not war**

**Anti-war protest
Sunday
April 15, 2018**

1:30 pm – Gather at Hennepin and
Lagoon Avenues, Minneapolis

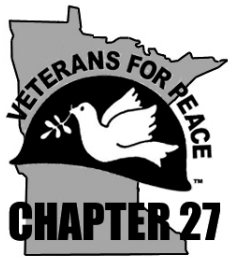
2:00 pm – March – the march will
conclude at or near the starting point

Spring anti-war actions will be held April 14-15 in U.S. cities to say enough of endless wars. On the weekend before Tax Day, speak out against U.S. wars.

Initiated by Minnesota Peace Action Coalition

Co-Sponsored by Anti-War Committee, Every Church a Peace Church, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Mayday Books, Minnesota Cuba Committee, St. Joan of Arc Peacemakers, Socialist Action, Twin Cities Peace Campaign, Women Against Military Madness, Veterans for Peace.

Endorsement list in formation. For more information call 612-827-5364 or 612-275-2720.



Veterans For Peace Chapter 27
4200 Cedar Av. S., Suite 7
Minneapolis, MN 55407

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
Spring 2018 Newsletter

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TWIN CITIES, MN
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SUPPORT THE TROOPS! BRING THEM HOME ALIVE NOW!

As of March 8, 2018:

At least 6,939 dead in Iraq and Afghanistan;
over one million injured veterans.

An estimated 22 veterans die from suicide each day,
amounting to over 24,090 over the past three years.



VFP member Bruce Berry created the “Unfit” banner on display at the Take a Knee rally at the Super Bowl in Minneapolis on Feb. 6. A number of local VFP members participated in the rally.