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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)



Flotilla joins Golden Rule sailing into Dubuque, Iowa.

Despite low water levels, Golden Rule reaches coastal waters

by Mary McNellis

The sailboat was launched in June, 2015, along with its mission of a nuclear-free world. The Golden Rule was found sunk and abandoned in 2010. For the next five years, she was painstakingly restored before once again splashing down into the chilly waters of northern California's Humboldt Bay.

The dream was to begin a new voyage of peacemaking in North American waters and beyond, raising awareness about the growing danger of nuclear war and building support for the abolition of atomic weapons. In her previous life, in 1958, the Golden Rule sailed toward the Marshall Islands with four Quaker peace activists in an effort to halt atmospheric nuclear weapons testing.

The intrepid crew did not reach that goal, but their actions ignited public outrage, ultimately resulting in the signing of the 1963 Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Golden Rule's example of civil disobedience served to inspire future generations of peace and envi-

ronmental activists, spawning various peace ships including Greenpeace.

Rising from virtual (and almost literal) ashes, the dream for Golden Rule was re-launched as she resumed her role as a living museum, floating classroom, a vessel imploring humankind to demand an end to nuclear armaments.

In August, 2015, she was given a rousing welcome when she sailed to San Diego for the VFP International Convention.

Seven years, many nautical miles and a pandemic later, this seed bore fruit. In 2001 VFP Chapter 27 president, Dave Logsdon, announced that the Golden Rule, nicknamed Goldie, was arriving in Minnesota to begin a 15-month "Great Loop" voyage, with plans to visit at least 100 U.S. cities and towns. She was to be brought by truck from California and launched at Bayport on the St. Croix River.

From mid-March 2022, a dozen or so VFP members convened weekly via Zoom with

Golden Rule, Cont'd on page 3

Prez Says...

by Dave Logsdon

*"Logic will get you from A to Z,
but imagination will take you anywhere."*

Albert Einstein

This past year has been at equal times vexing and fulfilling. We've seen some very powerful moments filled with poignancy and joy. We've also seen disturbing trends and lost some wonderful allies. Before we start our trek into 2023, let's take a look back at what our Veterans For Peace chapter has done in 2022.

"Imagination is more powerful than knowledge."

Albert Einstein

Many of you have read about the VFP owned Golden Rule sailboat that visited the Twin Cities, Stillwater, Hudson, and Red Wing this September. In early March, I was on a Zoom call about the Golden Rule's proposed trip to the Midwest to make the Great Loop journey that would take it down the Mississippi to the Gulf, around to the East Coast, then back down through the Great Lakes and then down the Illinois River.

One major problem: The Great Loop does not include the Twin Cities! I somehow persuaded Helen Jaccard, the extraordinary project supervisor (she says I badgered her) that they needed to start this journey here. Our chapter sending them a nice chunk of money helped grease the wheels.

I had faith in the men and women of this chapter that once we got the boat here, good things would happen, and it did. The boat ran aground 20 times getting to the Gulf of Mexico, but garnered tons of media attention for its anti-nuke message.

In Dubuque, Iowa, they were greeted by hundreds of Marshall Islanders who were displaced by our atom bomb testing in their homeland. Nineteen folks from the Twin Cities were in Dubuque when the boat arrived to the music and leis from the islanders and many a joyful tear was shed. The original Golden Rule never made it to that test zone in 1958, but they finally met the Marshallese people in Dubuque! Wow!

Actions, memorials, and bell ringing

Forgive me if I look back at 2022 as a blur. Our chapter participated in or helped organize over 100 actions, memo-

rials, and remembrances. That's a lot, but we have an amazing group of dedicated activists. Russia's invasion of Ukraine ramped up the commitment in many of our members. It has also been the source of conflict even within VFP. Our hearts go out to the people of Ukraine and we support welcoming them to this country as we should welcome all war refugees regardless of their religion or color of their skin. Our VFP statement of purpose clearly states that we resist any efforts of our government to participate overtly (sending guns), or covertly, in the affairs of other countries.

We rang our bells on Memorial Day, Armistice Day, and sadly, at memorials for our fellow peacemakers. We will miss Marie Braun from Women Against Military Madness, John Sherman, one of our dynamic mainstays, Ken Masters, and Pat Reisinger, past VFP president and someone who touched a lot of lives. PRESENTE!

We organized, with Oyate Hotanin (Voice of the people), a day of "Peace and Prayer" in conjunction with a larger gathering of Native people outside of Tampa, Florida.

As we look ahead to 2023, with a fair amount of trepidation, we have no choice but to keep on keeping on. Are we bailing out the ocean with a spoon? Perhaps. So let's stop talking! Grab a spoon!

"Always do what's next."

George Carlin

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Sat. noon to 6 p.m.**

Golden Rule, from page 1

VFP Golden Rule Project Director, Helen Jacard, visualizing and brain-storming events we could plan, working out venues, dates, logistics, fund-raising, publicity, and more. As explained in my last article, there were a few glitches along the way, including having to find a new insurance policy and, with ironic prescience, determining whether water levels were adequate to accommodate a five-foot draft. The green light was given, and “Goldie” was dropped off on schedule at the St. Croix Marina in Hudson, WI on September 2nd.

“We are sailing for a nuclear-free world and a peaceful, sustainable future,” Helen Jaccard said. “Our mission is all the more urgent now that the two nuclear superpowers are confronting one another in Ukraine, greatly increasing the possibility of nuclear war.”

The VFP Golden Rule project was very fortunate in securing Captain Kiko Johnston-Kitazawa to man the helm. With ancestors from Hawai'i and Guam, he is a fourth generation Hawaiian canoe builder and is active in the Soka Gakkai International Buddhist Community. At the tender age of 14, he sailed from Hawai'i to Canada and got his first captain's license; he has sailed across the Pacific Ocean several times. He sailed the Golden Rule from Kaua'i to O'ahu, circumnavigated O'ahu and then sailed her from Honolulu to San Francisco Bay. He's never sailed rivers, so this was to be a new experience for him.

Just after arriving in Hudson, Captain Kiko, Helen Jacard and her husband, Gerry Condon, hit the ground running. From Sep. 8-11, they visited Duluth, a very successful and auspicious beginning to the Golden Rule's “Great Loop.” The same weekend a few of us, including Kiko (who left Duluth early) tabled at the Mendota Mdewakanton Wacipi, raising awareness, broadening our network and paying homage to the Dakota tribes.

Back at the St. Croix Marina, crew and a few local volunteers worked to prepare the boat for her voyage. There was very little “down” time.

There were also events at the Phipps Center for the Arts in Hudson, another at the Stillwater Public Library, a kid's tent and tours of the boat.

Helen and Gerry were kept very busy for the next week with a flurry of events. WAMM, along with Twin Cities Nonviolent Campaign, cosponsored the opening ceremonies for the International 12 Days of Nonviolence, where Helen spoke, followed by the weekly WAMM vigil at the

Golden Rule, Cont'd on page 6

The Golden Rule in Dubuque



These Minnesotans were in Dubuque to support the Golden Rule

by Mike McDonald

One of the highlights thus far of the Golden Rule's trip down the Mississippi River was its stop in Dubuque Iowa.

Hearing the Marshallese music as the boat pulled into port was very emotional for many of us. Between 1946 and 1958 the U.S. tested 67 nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands. Children played in the fallen ash, thinking it to be snow. It was then that the islands were considered “by far the most contaminated place in the world.” Health problems such as cancer have followed these people to Iowa because of their exposure to atomic radiation.

Seeing the Marshallese flag flying beside the VFP sail on the Golden Rule was inspiring. These people, displaced from their homeland, were gracious in their sharing of music, dance, and food.

A big thank you goes out to Art Roche, who made most of the arrangements in Dubuque.

**"When we Glorify War,
we are not honoring the dead, we are
enticing the living to join them."**

**Smedley Butler
Four-Star USMC General**

End war, not life on earth

by Barry Riesch

May I remind folks that VFP is an anti-war organization. It is clearly stated in our Statement of Purpose:

“Abolish war as an instrument of national policy.” Supporting sending money and arms to an armed conflict in another country is “supporting war.”

The first casualty of war is truth. The discussion about who is to blame for the war in Ukraine can go on and on, and this article is not going to solve that issue. However, there are some truths we know. The fact that war is the enemy of solutions to the Climate Crisis is very real. Waging war is exactly the opposite of what we need to do to fight climate change. We need to be consuming fewer resources, especially fossil fuels.

But the U.S. uses vast amounts of resources in the manufacture, remanufacture, transport and use of weapons. Add to that planes, ships, bases all over the world and all the sup-

ply chains for supporting and feeding troops. Then there is all the environmental destruction, damage to infrastructure (and subsequent repair) and, of course, loss of human and other forms of life caused by war.



Veterans For Peace, Chapter 27 in Minneapolis, held a demonstration in front of Senator Klobuchar's office on Nov 11. Barry Riesch, a member of VFP's national Climate Crisis and Militarism Project, delivered the letter to Senator Amy Klobuchar's office.

All this has cost over \$92 billion so far in Ukraine alone. This is an unimaginable sum of money to most of us. The world's resources are limited, and we should not have to compete with war and militarism on how best to use them.

Our astronomical war budget has included, over the past two decades, up to \$7 TRILLION going directly from taxpayers to weapons makers. Last year, the average taxpayer paid \$929 to Pentagon contractors like Lockheed Martin.

The top recipients of Pentagon contracts are the Mercenary Five: Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, and General Dynamics.

Whether it's selling weapons to Saudi Arabia, fueling the climate crisis, or building fighter jets that won't fly, our

What can you do?

by Barry Riesch

The US has been at war since I joined VFP in 1991. What can you do? Call your elected representatives (Rep. Betty McCollum 202-225-6631 or 651-224-9191; Sen. Klobuchar 612-727-5220 or 202-224-3244; Sen. Smith 651-221-1016 or 202-224-5641; President Biden 202-456-1111 or <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>). Tell them no more money for arms or arms to Ukraine. We want an immediate ceasefire (Christmas Truce) and negotiations to take place immediately. How much further

escalation, death and suffering before we get to the negotiating table where we should have been before this madness ever started.

You can also schedule a slide presentation for any group you can assemble by our Climate Crisis and Militarism Group. <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/climatecrisis>.

You could also put a bumper sticker on your car or elsewhere “Militarism Fuels Climate Crisis.” These are available through our office.

foreign policy doesn't reflect our country's security needs. Rather, it reflects the desires of gigantic weapons corporations who gave lawmakers nearly \$30 MILLION during the recent midterms.

Simply put, this is major corruption. But all that money does not just work against peace; it actively funds anti-democratic forces, too.

Last November, world leaders convened in Egypt for the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27 Conference of Parties), to make speeches about the importance of addressing the climate crisis. We knew the U.S. delegation would show up prepared to leverage its economic, political, and military might to push forward an agenda that preserves the military industrial complex and the interests of U.S. corporations. The conference is so heavily weighted with lobbyists from the fossil fuel industry that it is hard to accomplish anything. There is pressure on now to change that for next year's conference.

As a counterweight, Veterans For Peace is fighting to protect our planet -- and our future -- from the greatest threat we have ever known, Climate Change. That means we are speaking truth. VFP members and allies planned actions on the ground in many U.S. cities during these meet-

ings, undermining the hard-nosed and regressive positions of the United States' formal delegation to the summit. We called on the U.S. Government to live up to its rhetoric by disclosing the carbon impacts of military operations and taking meaningful action to address the climate crisis. We will continue to take bold direct actions in cities across the U.S. until we can convince the public of the link between militarism and the climate crisis. (There is a full report on this at veteransforpeace.org/take-action/climatecrisis/stop-warsaveclimate.)

This project is designed to alert the public to the connections between the ongoing climate crisis and militarism, especially the war in Ukraine, by having veterans risk arrest to stress their commitment to the message. Even though the U.S. has finally passed a climate bill in the form of the "Inflation Reduction Act of 2022," the \$369 billion energy and climate portion of the bill allocates far less than the U.S. is projected to spend on its nuclear forces alone between 2021 and 2030 and is less than 1/30th of projected military spending during the same period. This ratio of military to climate mitigation spending cannot continue if the U.S. hopes to uphold its commitments made in the Paris Agreement at COP21.

The defense spending orgy goes on, as COVID surges again

by Frank Fuller

We're facing another surge in COVID cases this winter. Combined with a flu outbreak and an early RSV epidemic in children, hospitals are again filling up. In addition, the government will stop paying for COVID treatments this winter.

That means things could get a lot worse. Congress would not approve \$22.5 billion in funds for further COVID costs, so tests, treatments and most vaccines will be paid by insurance companies or by individuals. Those with insurance will be paying more out of pocket, and those without insurance will either face high costs or they will simply not get vaccines or treatment. And that will make things worse.

As an example of what those costs could be, Pfizer announced that it would be jacking up the price of its COVID vaccine. The government currently pays about \$30 a shot, but when the government ends COVID funding, Pfizer said the price will jump to \$110-\$130 a shot.

Ironically, this is all happening during the annual

Congressional orgy, otherwise known as Voting On The Defense Budget.

As in previous years, this year's defense budget is significantly larger than last year's. This year, the budget is increasing eight percent. It is an \$858 billion bloated budget (which is four times greater than the Build Back Better plan that Republicans and Sen. Joe Manchin opposed because of its huge cost.) that includes extra money to counter inflation and some funds to continue some defense programs that the Biden Administration tried to kill.

It also authorizes the purchase of five more F35 planes, planes that are already outdated. This plane was originally conceived as a low-cost fighter plane but is now the most expensive plane ever to fly and maintain. The life time cost to purchase, operate and maintain this particular boondoggle is now estimated to be \$1.7 trillion.

The budget also bans the Pentagon's COVID vaccine

Defense budget, Cont'd on page 12

Golden Rule, from page 3

Lake St./Marshall Ave. Peace Bridge.

The whirlwind of Twin City events came to a close on Sep. 25th at a potluck picnic event with presentations, music and kite-flying at the Crosby Farm Park followed by an opportunity to walk a few minutes to the Watergate Marina, tour the boat and chat with the crew.

On September 26 the crew headed south on the Mississippi River, bound for Prairie Island, Red Wing and towns downstream. Despite assurances from the St. Croix and Watergate Marinas that there was enough depth for Goldie, there wasn't. A couple hours after leaving Hudson, Goldie got stuck in the sandbars where the Kinnickinnic River joins the St. Croix, causing a two-hour delay into Prescott where the crew spent the night.

Global warming is making its effects very evident. According to 1st mate, Steve Buck, Goldie went aground 20 times before being forced from their original itinerary. As a result, instead of going down the lower Mississippi River (by-passing Memphis, Baton Rouge and New Orleans) the Golden Rule was diverted at Cairo, IL, sailing upstream on the Ohio River, then to the Tennessee River at Paducah, Kentucky. From there she sailed down the Tombigbee waterway to Mobile, Alabama. They encountered many "Loopers" who were confronted by the same situation.

Despite these obstructions, Goldie and her crew received generous media attention. The crew also spoke at dozens of events and made numerous connections with people in all of the places where they docked, anchored or were grounded.

The latest word is Goldie is happily plying the Intercoastal Waterways of Florida, soaking up the warm weather, enjoying the white sand beaches, flora and fauna of the region, watching dolphins swim beside the boat and alligators lazing on the shores.

After the New Year the Golden Rule will continue around the tip of Florida with a stop in Cuba, then up the



The Golden Rule arrives at Hudson by truck.

East Coast, up the Hudson River and Erie Canal, around the Great Lakes, and back to the Gulf of Mexico. The proposed schedule can be found at "Sail and Stop Plan" at the website below.

If you'd like to follow Goldie's progress, go to: share.garmin.com/goldenrule, which is updated every ten minutes. The history of the Golden Rule and her original crew is well-documented; for more information or to learn more about how you can support her Great Loop Voyage, access the website www.VFPGoldenRuleProject.org. Donations are very much appreciated. If you're able, please consider covering a day in port, a tank of diesel, crew food, etc. VFP Chapter 27 thanks the Golden Rule for visiting Minnesota. We send best wishes for smooth sailing and continued success in 2023!

Speakers Available!

We have a stable of capable speakers on a variety of topics relating to a veteran's perspective.

Email dlvfp27@gmail.com

Armistice Day 2022



by Mike McDonald

Our Armistice Day event started at one end of the Victory Memorial Drive. A dozen of us worked our way down the “drive,” saying the names of some of the 568 Hennepin County residents that died in the Great War. “Presente.”

At the Memorial flagpole we heard words from president Dave Logsdon and VFP member Steve McKeown of the significance of the day. At 11 a.m. the bells were rung.

The day continued with a protest at Sen. Amy

Klobuchar’s office. Several groups joined us and we left a letter requesting that our government “negotiate, don’t escalate” in Ukraine. Barry Riesch organized that event.

In the evening a few of us attended a “peace night” at Brit’s Pub. There were representatives from several countries that spoke of the need for peace. One active duty rep spoke of “troops at the ready” if needed. We were not pleased. Dave Logsdon spoke clearly of the need to stop the endless wars. We rang the bells one more time that day.

Peacestock was a great success

by Bill Habedank

As we think back on the events of 2022, this year's Peacestock was extra special. Combining Peacestock with the arrival of the Golden Rule in Red Wing was a no-brainer. The theme for Peacestock was set to coincide with the mission of the Golden Rule: a nuclear-free world. The first job at hand was getting the Red Wing area community to support this mission.

Red Wing's mayor, Mike Wilson, agreed to be at the dock to welcome the Golden Rule, and he read a proclamation in support of the Golden Rule's mission, declaring Friday, September 30th, Golden Rule Day in Red Wing. .

The next event was the installation and dedication of a peace pole in Red Wing's Levee Park. This effort was the culmination of an accelerated process of getting the Red

Wing City Council to approve it. The executive director of the Golden Rule Project, Helen Jaccard, was part of the ceremony.

Finally on September 30th, Peacestock was held in Red Wing's Central Park. Nearly 50 people attended, most of whom were VFP members or known peace activists, but there were attendees from the local Red Wing area which was a goal of the promotion efforts. They saw a great line-up of speakers, all speaking on nuclear disarmament. Speakers included Helen Jaccard, John LaForge (Nukewatch), Strong Buffalo (Buffalo Weavers), Colleen Rowley (former FBI agent) and VIPS, and others.

The entire event is online at www.peacestockvfp.org. Peacestock23 will be hard pressed to outdo this year's event but we will try, so stay tuned.

The worst day of my life

by Craig Wood

Reconciling life and death is mandatory for farm kids. Hearing stories about church members crushed under tractors can be as gut-wrenching as watching neighbors stop by with shovels to help your grandfather bury his horse. Dick Foley though, will never get over the shock of how three prisoners were killed in Vietnam.

Like many of his classmates, Foley grew up on a farm one or two dirt roads back in Le Sueur, Minnesota. He played sports and spoke proudly of his lead roles in high school plays before enrolling in Mankato State College where he spent more time drinking and hanging around with his fraternity brothers than studying. After flunking out, he ended up in Vietnam, slogging through rice paddies with the 25th Infantry Division famously portrayed in Oliver Stone's film *Platoon*. "I didn't take a shower for seven months, not even with a bucket," he said.

When his platoon was overrun during a heavy firefight seven miles outside of Saigon, he recalled sorting through the carnage the next day. A huge hole was dug for bodies and while he was still mourning the loss of Captain Rogers, who he said was "respected by everybody," he was given an order to shoot three injured Vietcong soldiers.

After back-and-forth calls between a radio operator and a colonel who called for the executions, the lieutenant beside him put a bullet in the neck in one of the prisoners. After telling the officer, "Sir, the man is still alive," Foley helped finish the job by spraying all three head-to-toe with a semi-automatic rifle. The details are grisly, and Foley walked away dazed, blood-splattered and said he felt like "Moses and the Red Sea had parted" when he saw a crowd of soldiers clear a path for him.

Foley returned home 35 pounds lighter with a huge handlebar mustache, a Bronze Star and so weather-beaten that his family didn't recognize him. Typical of many returning combat vets, he kept to himself, drank more and became annoyed if someone asked him if he ever killed anyone. "Three that I know of," he'd say before moving to the other end of the bar. When he did go back to college, he got serious about studying and said he "went from the shit list to the dean's list" before graduating.

After raising a family and working primarily in the insurance industry, he retired in 2007 and started volunteering at the Minneapolis VA where he discovered he was eligible for benefits due to PTSD, anxiety and depression. His disability was initially rated at 50 percent until a former hel-



Dick Foley

icopter pilot suggested he appeal the decision, telling him "I'm at 85 percent and you're way more fucked up than me." Foley was quickly bumped up to 70 percent which meant full benefits.

A few years later he joined Veterans For Peace (VFP) Chapter 27 in Minneapolis, where he found solace at VFP meetings and bounced around his idea of using private and public high schools to tell his WORST DAY OF MY LIFE story and caution students about sales pitches from military recruiters.

"I'm the anti-recruiter," he'd tell students when introducing himself at schools. "Joining the military is a crucial and critical decision that requires critical thinking, and if all you do is listen to the recruiting sergeant, where's the critical thinking?"

Careful not to discourage anyone from enlisting, he also made a point of advising students against using the hollow-sounding "Thank you for your service" cliché, contending "Thank you for your sacrifice" is more accurate.

He said he would tear up at times when students lined up to shake his hand and thank him for his sacrifice when he was through speaking. "Oh my God, they heard me" he said out loud during this interview and recalled telling them to "go home and tell your parents." He also took comfort after students told him they were rethinking their decisions to join the armed services or when he received tender letters from them. Sometimes he'd reread the letters and cry when

he was alone. Other times he'd read them out loud at VFP meetings and vets would share tears with him. Chapter 27 member Vernon Hall said "knowing Dick and his background, and what he went through in Vietnam, it took a lot of courage for him to go into classrooms and tell his story honestly. I have a lot of admiration for him."

He wasn't alone in his struggle with trauma. According to the VA, about 30 percent of Vietnam Vets experience PTSD at some point in their lives, and processing it may take alternative routes outside of conventional therapies. Foley discovered that using classrooms as a stage and the public speaking voice, which he developed in theater, not only touched students deeply with a story, but cathartically helped him heal by telling it.

One Vietnam vet I know hiked the 2,200 Appalachian Trail to confront his demons in the wilderness. Another attempted to soothe his moral injury by revisiting Vietnam

to meet with members of a village he dropped bombs on. About six years ago, an Iraq War Vet from Kansas City wandered into our local VFP meeting and kept to himself and didn't say much. He did agree to join a group of us who were learning the "lost wax technique" to make bronze bells. At the end of the class, the instructor's jaw dropped during a critique when she heard him say that making a bell probably kept him from committing suicide. The transformative qualities of camaraderie, uncommon openness, and art can work in mysterious ways.

Although Foley has been invited back to speak in high schools, he said he doesn't have the energy he used to. He hopes that those thinking about enlisting will remember the 58,200 names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall and listen for stories military recruiters don't want to talk about, like the one about the officer who gave an order to shoot three wounded young men on May 12, 1968.

Refugees, Home and the Bomb

by Steve Mckeown

According to the UN Refugee Agency, at the end of 2021, 89.3 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence or human rights violations. This includes 27.1 million refugees. As of May, 2022, that number grew to 100 million forcibly displaced, with the additional refugees coming mainly from Syria and the Russian War in Ukraine.

Many of the displaced people live in refugee camps, and the four largest are in Kenya. The largest is a camp which is a city onto itself called Dadaab that is hundreds of miles from any settlement, and has over 330,000 inhabitants. These people, if they are lucky enough to have a tent or sticks held together with mud, also have to contend with hunger, disease, and warring tribes. More often than not, if there is trouble, Kenyan police blame and often beat them, and the UN workers hightail it for awhile. Perhaps the worst is worrying about those left behind. It is not rare for these refugees to try to go back to their home, and for those at home to try to make it to the camp.

I recently read a book about this camp called *The City of Thorns; NINE LIVES IN THE WORLD'S LARGEST REFUGEE CAMP* by Ben Lawrence (Portabello Books 2016). Publishers Weekly wrote: "It is a compelling examination of the tragedy of a place where one can only survive by imagining a life elsewhere." Lawrence spent a great deal of time in the camp writing with a descriptive style like

Barbara Kingsolver or Tony Hillerman of people, place, history, and the dynamics of how this all came together for the people he wrote about. True accounts with a human face, and definitely no glamorization.

Ukrainians have a sovereign nation to return to, one that is resisting a takeover by the world's largest nuclear nation, run by a despot who claims that Ukraine doesn't exist. The extent of what kind of nation they will return to depends largely on how soon the Russians withdraw, and what kind of carnage they leave behind.

With the exception of the hundreds of thousands of forced displaced Ukrainians by Russia into Russia's so-called "filtration camps," along with the kidnapping of children, most of the refugees have fled to NATO countries where they can find care and safety. One wonders what might have happened if Ukraine hadn't given up its 1,700 nuclear weapons to Russia by treaty in which the U.S. was authorized to provide security to Ukraine if Putin would have invaded. Much of the Left's response in the U.S. is to ignore this treaty, and/or come up with condescending platitudes such as Ukraine should be neutral. Years ago, Bishop Tutu said that to be neutral is to be on the side of the oppressor.

Meanwhile the refugees in this world want to return home, and have a home to come home to. A home where the warlords and the wanna-be-czars have no authority over

Refugees, Cont'd on page 10

Remember the Armistice

by Larry Johnson

Thanks to Steve McKeown, Chapter 27 began REMEMBERING THE ARMISTICE over 30 years ago. The volume of bells ringing for Peace on 11/11/11 grows each year. Here are some bells I heard in 2022:

1. I missed our Chapter event because St. Joan of Arc (SJA) asked me to ring my Armistice bell at their November 11 Remembrance. Jean Heberle opened the worship, calling prayerfully to end War and to amp up total emotional and physical care for Veterans.

2. I work part time for Plymouth Church, and their archivist knew Marie Braun and gave me a 1971 Star Tribune ad because she saw us ring bells at Marie's funeral. Placed by Plymouth members, the ad called for an end to the War in Vietnam. Plymouth remembered the Armistice on the Sunday nearest Nov 11, as did Community Presbyterian in Rochester, St. John's University near St. Cloud, and St. Albert the Great and St. Francis Cabrini in Minneapolis. We regularly invite churches to participate, and we know that many continue and inspire others to begin with no expectation we'll ever hear about it. The Ringing of Remembrance fills the air.

3. City of Bells, (www.cityofbells.com), restores Minnesota church bells. They also ring the Liberty Bell replica at the Capitol 11 times at 11 on 11/11, and encourage churches to Ring Peace Bells.

4. Cynthia and Michael Orange, Dianna Diers, Tim Mungavan, and I remembered the legacy of VFP stalwart and Co-op Pioneer, John Sherman on Don Olson's KFAI show. Before he died, Dianna asked John how he wanted to be remembered. With that big smile, he said, "GOOD GUY, FUN GUY, PEACE GUY". My Armistice Bell rang to honor my friend, John.

5. I'm looking for young people to take over the story-telling at the annual Hiroshima Remembrance, where Chapter 27 also rings Bells to say "no more nuclear weapons." That mission took me to Avalon School in St. Paul to ring my bell and tell the Peace Cranes story.

6. I did GHOSTWRITING FOR AESOP to help writers reframe the old fables. One is about the mice wanting a bell around the Cat's neck to warn of impending danger. The great plan failed when no mouse dared volunteer to hang the Bell. I rang my Bell, suggesting a modern version might be to "hang a bell" on war profiteers, taking action with War Industry Resisters Network (WIRN)

7. In 2013, the last year I was President of Chapter

27, we did enormous work with the National VFP office to act on Bob Heberle's resolution to promote Armistice Remembrance throughout the U.S. Events nationwide now appear through www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/armistice-day.

8. In 2018 traditional Veterans groups were encouraged to replace the 21-gun salute with Bells ringing for Peace 21 times. The November 2022 Legion magazine again encouraged Legion posts, churches, et al, to go to www.bellsofpeace.org for help to ring bells 21 times on Nov 11th.

9. A Nov 28, 2018 National Geographic article describes how THE EARTH RANG LIKE A BELL on November 11 that year. Scientific reports said earthquakes often cause vibrations that make portions of the earth "ring," but this one was most striking worldwide. Neither the 100th anniversary of the Armistice, nor the ancient mystical significance of 11/11/11 were mentioned.

10. Catholics celebrate November 11 as the day Roman soldier Martin of Tours died in 397 A.D. Converted to Christianity, St. Martin said, "As a soldier for Christ, I can no longer kill the enemy."

11. Disclaimers of "Armistice Day" say November 11 was changed to Veterans Day in 1954 to honor all Veterans, not just those from World War I. The thrust of Armistice Day was always that the horror of World War One demanded it be the Last. As late as 1929, the President spoke at Arlington, saying, "No greater honor can be paid to fallen soldiers than to work tirelessly so that fewer need make that sacrifice in the future. That is why we REMEMBER THE ARMISTICE for all Veterans and for all people."

Refugees, from page 9

them. Over time Ukraine has experienced what Russia has done to them, especially from Stalin. Their resistance is an act against war just as resistance to Colonial power is. Additionally, now it is more important than ever to rid the world of nuclear blackmail, by having the nine nuclear nations come together to sign and implement the Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons. If nuclear war breaks out, the refugee camp at Dadaab, Kenya would seem like the Taj Mahal for all that would be left, if even that.

Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire - a Buddhist proposal for peace

Reviewed by Paula Staff

This book was first published in 1967 by Parallax Press and discusses the war known in Vietnam as the American War. The first edition included a forward by Thomas Merton. The second edition published in 2022 added a forward written by the beat poet and environmental activist, Gary Snyder. Thich Nhat Hanh, known as “Thay,” which means teacher. Thay has taught around the world about mindfulness and peaceful living.

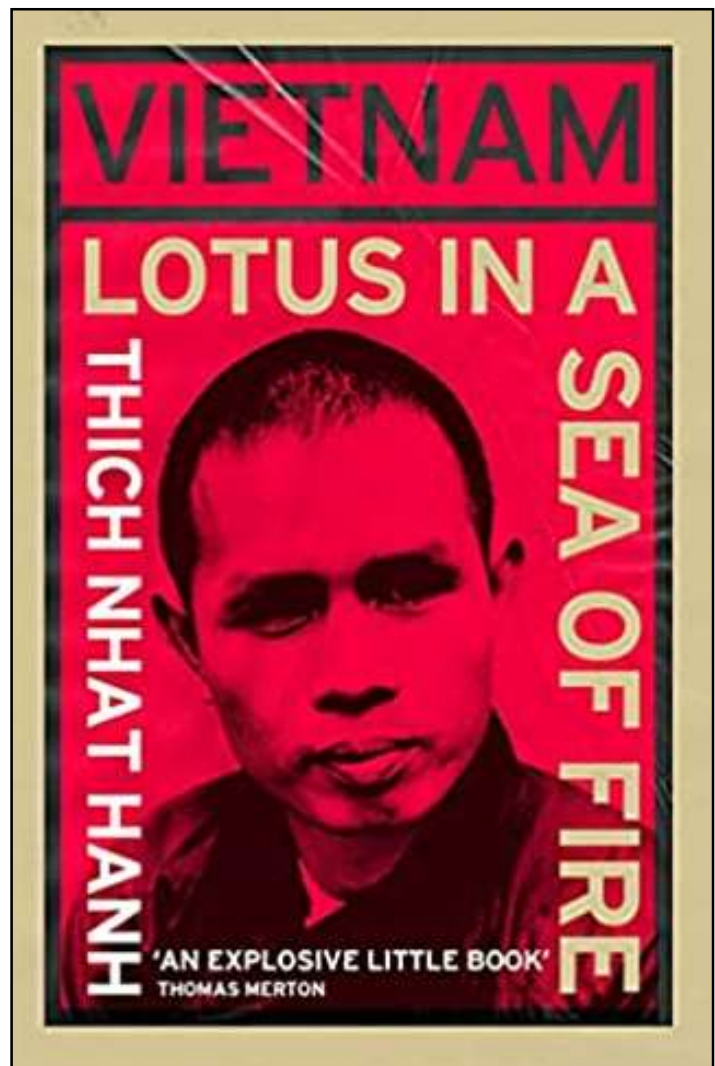
Thay visited the United States many times to seek support for his efforts to create a movement of peace in Vietnam during the American war. He was one of the authors of the Peace Accord in Paris, even though he was exiled from his home country at the time. That was a successful effort leading the eventual resolution of the American War.

Thay wrote about his educational experiences and the history of conflicts in Vietnam. Other countries battled for empire, but in the end it was the country itself that triumphed, not, however, without grievous suffering. The people suffered greatly. The devastation was extensive. People were separated from their ancestral lands and roots. People, animals, and habitat were destroyed without qualms. Dislocated people fled to refuge camps and left the country in an attempt to live without war.

Gary Snyder wrote, “The title of the book is no less relevant today. Our world is on fire, literally with the fires of ecological crisis and war, and spiritually with the exploitative, dehumanizing, extractivist practices rooted in our human greed. If we are to honor Thay’s life, we must come to our senses. We must wake up to our hearts.”

His proposal for peace offered a way out of the American war. It is unknown whether or not it was put into practice. His suggestions are now dated since peace has come to Vietnam and the country is once again reunited. After reading the book you will be able to judge for yourself.

Thay died January, 2022, at his root temple in Hue, Vietnam. He was 95 years old. Snyder commented, “He left us a profound legacy of practice, transformation, peace and love for all beings. We will miss his breath in the world and



feet on the earth. But bestowed upon us the truth is a great treasure, for he turned the Dharma wheel for the sake of all beings. Now it is for our lives to do the same.” Dharma means the truth about suffering and its end.

In 2003, my husband and I went to Estes Park, Colorado for a week-long retreat with Thay. It was well-attended by people of all ages and walks of life. The hours were filled with meditation, talks, small groups, and relaxation. When he spoke, Thay was like a clear bell ringing into the cells of our body, mind and heart. He nourished us with his wisdom and insight. We were asked to become more than we were when we arrived. I ask you to read this book, which is available through Hennepin County Libraries. It may lead you to other writings by Thay and a greater understanding of the American war.

In memory of Pat Reisinger

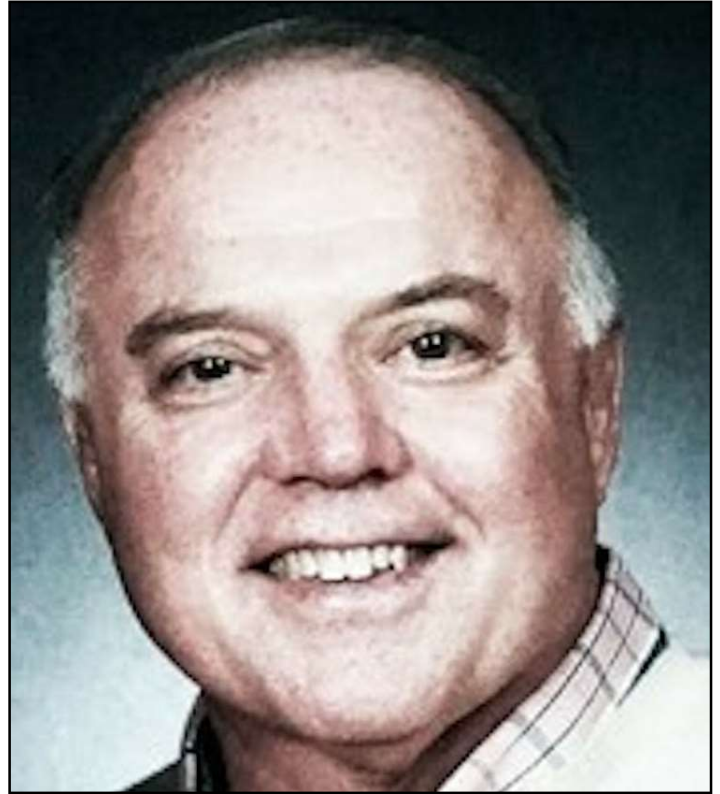
by Steve McKeown

A couple of years ago, when Pat first became ill, Debby, his wife of over 50 years, brought the circle talking stick used at our chapter's Fourth of July annual retreat at Wilder Forest to me, which is now in our office. Pat was often the hospitality host and organizer for our retreat.

Pat joined VFP in 1990 right before the First Gulf Massacre. At his funeral, his son Jeff said that when he did, he told his family that he had found a veterans organization that matched his values. Jeff also said it was one of the few times he had seen his dad cry. Pat was a Chaplain's Assistant in the Vietnam War. Jeff also told us how Pat, while riding the light rail and bus to the Minneapolis VA where he worked as a clinical social worker, would often seek out those who looked like they were having a hard time and listen to them. If they were a veteran, he would encourage and help them get care at the VA.

Pat was our Chapter President in the early nineties, and at that time we chartered the first bus ever to go to the School of the Americas in Ft. Benning, Ga. We arrived early. The gates were wide open, and our drivers took us a couple of miles into the school. We got off the bus and converged on the School's Hall of Fame. They wanted to arrest us, but Pat used his social skills to talk them out of it. I remember one of the drivers attending a party afterward at Pat and Debby's house, which no doubt made Pat's engaging smile and chuckle amplify.

On November 14, our chapter rang bells in a snowstorm at Pat's graveside close to where he had once organized an Armistice Remembrance. I mentioned that years ago Pat



Pat Reisinger

gave us a number of heirloom tomato plants from his beautiful and prolific garden. My wife Joan saves the seeds after each harvest, and they live on in many of our salads. Thank you to Debby and family for sharing Pat with us. and the Seeds of Peace he sowed.

Our chapter would also like to thank Pat's family for their contribution in honor of Pat to the VFP Iraq water project.

Defense budget, from page 5

mandate, something conservatives demanded.

Getting back to COVID, as of mid-November, those 65 and older made up 92 percent of the deaths from COVID. Many of these victims were vaccinated. This is the first time over 90 percent of the COVID deaths in the U.S have been among those over 65. Two years ago, only 58 percent of COVID deaths were the elderly.

I have to admit this concerns me personally. Being over 70 and having had several rounds of intensive chemo and radiation treatments a couple years ago, my immune system

is mildly compromised. So this is all worrisome, even though I have been vaccinated as well as boosted three times.

But the fact that the government is cutting back on COVID funding as another surge is beginning while once again significantly increasing the Pentagon budget just shows again how little input we the people have in this government.

Will this orgy ever end?

In Memory of Ken Masters

by Joan Johnson

We lost our dear friend and fellow VFP member Ken Masters on October 30th at age 98. Having served in WWII, he became very active in peace work with his wife Carol starting in the early 1980's. For many years prior, they had already been involved in various service projects, such as Meals on Wheels, cooking for an AIDs group residence, working with Habitat for Humanity and also Loaves and Fishes.

In 1983, Ken had to post bail for Carol, who had gotten arrested with other women at an encampment outside Sperry Univac, maker of nuclear weapons. The subsequent trial made it clear to both of them that they needed to learn more about the weapons industry and international law. From that point on, she said "We engaged in serious study and activism; the next decades brought us many friends, colleagues and co-conspirators from Women Against Military Madness, Veterans for Peace, the Community of St. Martin, and the long-running Minnesota Coalition for Peace and Justice," adding, "I'll always be grateful for those years."

In the late 90's, I found myself living three doors down from this very committed and active couple. I first noticed their car named "Irene" (meaning "goddess of peace"), which displayed some thought-provoking bumper stickers I'd not seen before. Before actually meeting Ken and Carol, their car's messages inspired me to check out peace groups and to eventually plaster my own car with a huge array of stickers! An avid gardener, Ken generously shared plants and advice, tools and assistance. His pretty maroon "Autumn Joy" flowers continue to grace our back yard each fall. Back then, it was a real treat to picnic with other "peace" friends in Ken's and Carol's backyard sanctuary, among gorgeous flowers, shrubs, veggie garden and a beau-



Ken and Carol at one of the many long-running potluck gatherings with the group People Against Military Madness. (photo taken May 2019 at author's home.)

tiful massive pine tree. They had been among the first bridge vigilers in 1999, and my husband Steve recalls hearing Ken count the honks of appreciation at our signs. As we circled up afterwards for our weekly meetings, he would encourage us, saying, "the number of honks is increasing!" And indeed they were; every year brought more honks of agreement and support.

Ken and Carol generously helped plan and facilitate many peace and social justice events, provide refreshments, literature, and tabling. They washed all of the dishes at our own wedding reception, for which we were so grateful. The eulogies his sons and friend gave at his funeral had a common theme: "Ken was a do-er, a fixer, someone who wanted to make things better." And that is how Carol lovingly remembers him, "As someone with a strong work ethic, who had to be doing, being of service." She explained how, sometimes she wanted to take an easier route in solving a problem, but Ken would emphatically counter with "Easy way isn't usually best way!"

Ken Masters, Continued on page 14

Ken Masters, from page 13

Ken was very well-read and knowledgeable on a variety of different subjects, sharing his insights freely, and not hesitating to also share his fun sense of humor. At the annual New Years Eve “HAFTA” gathering that he and Carol hosted in their home there was much thought and preparation behind that too. Besides being a super fun potluck party, with delicious entrees made by Chef Ken, attendees would “hafta” bring a “white elephant” gift (or two) to trade — something you wanted to get rid of. Instead of tossing your unwanted holiday gift, old mags and books, etc., you could easily “re-gift” them at HAFTA!

Ken’s and Carol’s lives continue to be an inspiration to us and others. Steve and I are certainly blessed to have known Ken all these years, and are grateful for Carol’s ongoing friendship. On Nov. 10, at the start of Ken’s memorial service, Steve spoke to friends and family in attendance about the meaning of the Armistice and bell-ringing. He and other Veterans for Peace members then rang their bells 11 times to honor Ken and his work for peace.

EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

5-6 pm Mondays. Stop Line Three Vigil. In front of Governor’s Mansion on Summit Ave., St. Paul.

5-6 pm Mondays. White Bear Lake Peace Vigil, Hwy. 61. and 4th Ave.

4-5 pm Wed. Lake Street/Marshall Ave. Peace Bridge Vigil.

4:45 pm Wed., 50th and Halifax, Mpls., Grandmothers for Peace Vigil. (FFI call 612-827-5364)

Monthly VFP chapter meeting, 2nd Sun., 6 pm. 4200 Cedar Ave. S. They are now hybrid meetings (subject to change because of future pandemic situations). Contact VFP at 612-821-9141 for information on how to connect.

Golden versus Platinum Rule! (some musings)

by Ron Staff

Everyone knows the Golden Rule. It’s simple.

DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU!

However in these ‘WOKE’ times it may be too great an ask for actual white people to

Try on an adage a little more current.

There might well be a richer concept in the Platinum

Rule. Also simple.

DO UNTO OTHERS AS THEY WOULD HAVE YOU DO UNTO THEM.

Such a small shift could lead to actually “getting to know” another who was formerly unknown.

Voila! A richer, widened range of friends and acquaintances.

Of course it might also challenge one’s expectations.

Why do Minnesotans need the Minnesota Health Plan?

by Ken Engelhart, MD,
Health Care For All Minnesota

Have you, your family, friends or relatives had to confront these common stresses caused by our current healthcare financing system?

- Unaffordable health insurance due to premiums increasing faster than the cost of living
- Relentlessly increasing out-of-pocket costs (deductibles, co-pays, co-insurance)
- Needing to declare personal bankruptcy because of medical expenses
- Being denied treatment or testing recommended by your doctor
- Limits to your freedom to choose your doctor, clinic or hospital because of insurance company networks
- Needing to resort to crowdsourcing, such as Go Fund Me, to pay medical bills
- Being one of the 41 percent of Americans who carry the burden of medical debt
- Dying because health care was denied

Paying for your healthcare shouldn't have to be so expensive, complex and restrictive. The Minnesota Health Plan (MHP) would alleviate the stresses mentioned above and save families and businesses money spent on healthcare. Payment for medical expenses under the Minnesota Health Plan would be directed to where it belongs: patient care instead of corporate profit. **Note: The Veterans Health Administration and Indian Health Services would remain unchanged under the MHP.**

Here are the fundamental governing principles of the Minnesota Health Plan:

- Ensure all Minnesota residents are covered.

- Cover all necessary care, including dental, vision and hearing, mental health, chemical dependency treatment, prescription drugs, medical equipment and supplies, long-term care, and home care.
- Allow patients to choose their doctors.
- Reduce costs by negotiating fair prices and by cutting administrative bureaucracy, not by restricting or denying care.
- Premiums made affordable to all based on ability to pay and elimination of co-pays.
- Focus on preventive care and early intervention to improve health.
- Ensure that there are enough health care providers to guarantee timely access to care.
- Continue Minnesota's leadership in medical education, research, and technology.
- Provide adequate and timely payments to providers.
- Use a simple funding and payment system.

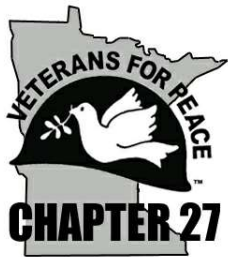
We have a common sense, affordable plan that focuses on delivering to you and your family the care that your medical team recommends. Let's become advocates for the Minnesota Health Plan by telling our Minnesota Senators and Representatives that we want this better way to pay for the healthcare we need and deserve!

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the nineties, our chapter passed a resolution at the National VFP Convention in support of the Single Payer health care bill. At that time, and still applicable, many stayed in the military or defense industry jobs to receive medical care. Single Payer would allow (not guarantee) more people to be employed in fewer violent jobs. The burden of a lack of health care or needing to stick it out on a miserable job wouldn't be on one's back. Less stress all around would, in itself, lower health costs.

**U.S. MILITARISM
FUELS
CLIMATE CRISIS**

www.veteransforpeace.org/take-action/climatecrisis





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Winter 2022-23 Newsletter

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SUPPORT THE TROOPS! BRING THEM HOME ALIVE NOW!

As of Dec. 14, 2022:

At least 8,492 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.



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