Veterans For Peace # 27
Minutes of the Meeting Sunday, 14 November 2004
VAMC Ft. Snelling, MN

President Varone called the this very important and interesting meeting to order at 1815 hours.

Members Present: John Varone, Todd Erickson VP, Wayne Wittman Tres., Tom Chisholm Sec., Doug Drewes, Joe Johnson, Shiloh Fetzeh, Chante Wolfe, Kim Doss Smith, Bob Heberle, Pat Downey, Jennie Downey, Barry Riesch, Vern Hall, Steve Clark and Lee Murray.

October Minutes: Reviewed briefly, None were mailed. They were sent to as many members as possible by e-mail. Please notify the secretary or the office if you have an e-mail address. The minutes will appear on the web site.

Staff Report: Shiloh is registered for the grant writing seminar. Joe Johnson is busy securing locations for Canoe venues full time. Chante Wolfe will not be in the office. See fiscal and finance.

President's Remarks: The Armistice Day Remembrance arranged by Wayne Wittman was held on the Capitol Mall at the First Shot Memorial. The names of all those KIA since hostilities began in October 2001 were read by various members attending the ceremony. A Pioneer Press reporter was present and a TV crew. Precise plans for future Memorial and Armistice Day ceremonies and permission from appropriate authorities are needed. (See poem)

E-bay will be an important addition to fund raising as outlined by Sgt. Varone. Items donated for sale on E-bay will generate substantial income. Donors will receive a tax deduction for the sale price.

A VA news account indicates that neuro toxins in addition to stress (PTSD) will be identified and treated henceforth, recognizing finally that certain agents including DU cause significant acute and chronic disease.

NVFP: See the recent newsletter. A *new Executive Secretary is sought*. If you are interested in relocating to St. Louis speak to Bob Heberle, Barry Riesch or Wayne Wittman, all members of the National Board.

Committee Reports:

Newsletter: The autumn edition has been mailed. Once again, the appearance and content were excellent. Wider input is solicited. Chante Wolfe is stepping down from her position as editor after three years. a motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously commending her for her exceptional leadership and improved quality of the Newsletter. Joan Johnson will be the editor. The next edition is scheduled for spring. Submit your articles now!

Speaker's Bureau: No action despite our recent wide and receptive exposure to the MEA convention at the Excel Center. Members are asked to locate clubs, schools, churches and similar venues and request participation in seminars and meetings to spread our program of Peace.

Iraq Water Project: Thus far VFP has provided $220,00.00 to rebuilding water sources in Iraq. Despite the triple destruction of Fallujah, Barry Riesch indicated the effort will continue. He contrasted the amount spent by NGOs with Iraqi help to the millions by the Halliburton giant. Ellen Barfield, NVFP representative to the UN provided information about the project to one of the work sessions that august body.

Fund Raising: We will have a table at the SOA again. Calhoun Square will continue as the winter site for the Canoe. Volunteers are needed for Thanksgiving weekend and again during the entire Christmas week of 26 December-January 2nd. With enough staffing, we can sell several thousand tickets and promote Peace. Help us and this nation to use words, rather than weapons to "liberate" Iraq and Afghanistan and redirect funds from the Defense Department towards critical humanitarian programs, needed in so many places including Sudan.

You will receive a fund raising letter!! Please respond.

SOA: The bus will leave, Friday 19 November. It is full. *Wayne Wittman will resign* from chairing this committee, scheduling buses, the responsibility, leadership and discipline critical to bringing buses and people to Ft. Benning and returning them home safely. Who will assume the job?

Fiscal and Finance: This is the most important part of these minutes. The Executive Committee recommended implementing the suggestions outlined by President Varone: move the office to larger quarters by 31 December to the basement of St. Stevens School, revise the budget and severe relations to the current Winds of Peace Grant. These changes were discussed with Harold Nielsen by both John Varone and Wayne Wittman. They were carefully outlined and discussed by the members. The revised budget will be $80,465. Increased revenue will be provided primarily from increased canoe ticket and merchandize sales at more venues, and eliminating Chante's position and salary. Milage for Joe Johnson and bonding our treasurer, must be done. Shiloh's salary will be increased. Additional revenue to off set additional expenses and funds from Winds of Peace will be sought from major donors, E-bay income and potential grants currently being generated. The remaining money from the Winds of Peace Grant has not been resolved clearly enough to include in the minutes.

The St. Stevens site has 706 sq. ft, two rooms, double the area at Sabathani. Rent is $632/month including utilities, security system, parking and room enough for our meetings. In addition, St. Stevens is an active peace and justice Parish and School which supports VFP. A thorough examination of this change continued, but ended positively in motions to move to St. Stevens and to approve the new budget. These motions were seconded and unanimously approved.

John Varone will write Mr. Nielsen, discuss again the motions, and thank him for his invaluable assistance over the life of chapter # 27. One member suggested naming the Chapter after Harold Nielsen.

New Business: Our attractive and well informed guest, Ms. Leslie Reindl, President of the Minnesota Alliance of Peace Makers discussed the past and future role of MAPM and asked for regular input form VFP. She thanked us for our help during their annual meetings. She asked that all scheduled events be sent to MAPM well in advance to coordinate events by the 52 member organizations and prevent conflicts. Only Minnesota has a MAPS program so far as she knew. She urged that questions and suggestions be sent via e-mail, letter or phone to MAPM. **Their web site is:**

www.mapm.org. All members of MAPM must work in unison to generate greater influence on State and Federal politicians and political parties who thus far have opted for war rather than Peace. She did not outline plans for a mass demonstration to mark the anniversary of "end of hostile action" proclaimed by Mr. Bush in early May of 2003 on a carrier off the California coast. We have been in Afghanistan for more than three years. For further information about MAPM meetings and events please view the web site indicated above. *Dick Bernard,* a VFP member, will be the next president of MAPM. Tom Dooley and Jim Steinhagen are our representatives.

A Christmas Pot Luck Party is scheduled for 11 December, Saturday at 1900 hours at St. Martins Table on Riverside near Cedar Ave. Please reserve that date, bring something to add to the Pot and enjoy the music provided by various members as well as Pop Wagner.

A counter recruitment program, *Refusing to Fight* is workshop focused on conscientious objection, the Selective Service Act and the forthcoming draft is scheduled for 25 January at Trinity Lutheran Church at 28th St. and Minnehaha in Minneapolis. This vital conference has been arranged by Kim Doss Smith, John Sherman, Chante Wolfe. and others. There will be a $25 fee to underwrite the events. Mark your calendars now !!

Bob Heberle, retired teacher, former editor of the Newsletter and NVFP board member among other activities wants every member and all parents with high school students to call their respective school board members, principals and superintendents. They should remind them that the the law, No Child Left Behind includes this important stipulation: *Schools shall inform the parents of their right to opt out of having their students names and other information given to military recruiters.* Parents that do not want their children identified by military recruiters must inform the principals of the school they attend!

Nominations for 2005: John Varone, President; Chante Wolfe, VP; Todd Erickson, Teasurer; Bob Heberle, Secretary; Wayne Wittman, membership chair.

Adjournment: The meeting ended about 2100 hours. Happy Thanksgiving!

The torch they threw from stricken hand
God grant shall light a better land
And all the world united stand
By Flanders Fields

Frederick George Scott., Arch Deacon of Ottawa, Canada
From the poem Rememberance in:

The Crown of Life: The World of John McCrae
Dianne Graves