

VETERANS FOR PEACE

Minutes October 26, 2009

- I. **Attending:** George Hutchinson, Todd Allen, Jim Spain, Bart Bolger, Del Shirley, Bob Stebbins (president).

Leah Bolger is in the hospital for back surgery.

II. Administration:

a. Treasurer's Report & Peace Fair Wrap-up—Bart Bolger

Balance \$1198

Legal defense reserve \$400

Working balance \$798

III. Past actions/events status and debrief

- a. **Peace vigil 8th anniversary of Afghanistan war**—Bob Stebbins. The event was well attended and can be viewed on U-Tube.
- b. **“Rethink Afghanistan” DVD presentation**—Bart Bolger. About a dozen attended. Lots of discussion. Albany Peace Seekers are considering giving a showing. Bart has the DVD for loan.
- c. **Leah Bolger's participation in Washington, DC & NYC actions and VFP Board meeting**—Bart. See attached report by Leah on her 3-week trip to DC, NYC and Portland, ME for protests, conferences, and VFP business.
- d. **Friday Oct 23rd “Project Service Connect” in Corvallis**—Bob Stebbins. Two vista volunteers organized the event. Many many services were provided agencies and professionals such as dentists, health counselors, DMV, Oregon Department of Employment, etc. The plan is to do this in the fall and Albany do it in the spring. We should table next year but we must consider what “services” we might offer.
- e. **Friday Oct 23rd “Contagious Love Experiment” informal dinner**—Bob Stebbins.. Josh Stieber and Conor Curran are riding across the U.S. to spread a message of peace and love to overcome the most difficult situations and differences. Both of the fellows are Iraq war veterans. See their website <http://contagiousloveexperiment.wordpress.com/about/>

IV. Action Team Reports and planning:

- a. **VFP response to Afghanistan troop surge announcement**—Bart Bolger. VFP National is preparing a response. VFP National is strongly opposing any escalation. See their web site for a call to action: www.veteransforpeace.org.

- b. **Veterans Day Parade November 11**—Bob Stebbins. We are officially registered. We are going to encourage that our whole purpose statement be read without editing. Bob is going to fix his float and we will have the banner. The theme is “Generations of Valor.”
- c. **Plans for staffing the men’s cold weather shelter**—Bob Stebbins. Our week is December 6th thru the 12th. Westside Community Church is providing it again. Bob Stebbins will be present to orient our volunteers and Aleita Hass-Holcombe is normally there each night to answer questions about procedures. Let Bob Stebbins know if you can volunteer and which shift you prefer. Next VFP meeting we will coordinate shifts.
- d. **“Resisting militarism: no more flyovers at OSU games”**—Leah & Bart. Bart made phone calls to vet centers and VA hospital/clinics re triggering psychological repercussions and found it is not much of an issue. The consensus is that we drop it as an issue for now.
- e. **Truth in recruiting.** Bart has arranged to be at Philomath High School on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. He is hoping to have a table set up at the main school entrance in the same area where the military recruiters are now setting up, but not at the same time. Bart would like someone to table with him.

V. Scheduled Future Actions/Events

November 11—Veterans Day Parade, Albany

November 23—Next VFP meeting

November 27—Holiday Parade, Corvallis

Daily 5:00 to 6:00 pm—Corvallis Peace Vigil, Benton County Courthouse

Del Shirley

Scribe

Report by Leah Bolger to Chapter 132, October 2009

I just returned to Corvallis from a very productive 3-week trip to Washington DC, New York City, and Portland, Maine. The following report describes highlights of my trip:

1. “Who Decides About War?” conference, held October 2nd and 3rd. This conference was an off-shoot of the “Bring the Guard Home” campaign, and looked at the legal authority and responsibility of the president, Congress, and the people in making decisions about war and conflict. I was a panelist and spoke about the voice of the people through my experience with the BTGH campaign in Oregon. You can watch video of the entire conference here: www.whodecidesaboutwar.org.

2. Protest at the White House, October 5th. VFP was very well represented at this demonstration of 500. Eight members of VFP (including President Mike Ferner and myself) were arrested when we failed to disburse. There were four points we were emphasizing: Out of Iraq now. Out of Afghanistan now. Shut down the indefinite detention camps at Guantanamo and Bagram. Stop illegal drone attacks in Pakistan. VFP joined several other peace and justice organizations in the demonstration, and we received excellent media coverage, including the front page of the Washington Post (above the fold!)

3. Lobby visits to Wyden, Merkley, Schrader. Was able to spend about 10 minutes with Schrader personally when he stepped on to the elevator I was on! I pushed for no surge in Afghanistan.

4. Met with two members of the Israeli Shimitism (teenage war resisters who went to jail rather than serve in the IDF).

5. Participated in march and protest in support of Palestinians.

6. Participated in demonstrations in support of LGBT rights.

7. Spoke at Times Square demonstration for awareness of Military Sexual Trauma. Good media coverage. Sandra Lee, a veteran victim who spoke for the first time in public about being raped has been contacted by Newsweek magazine about doing a "My Turn" column.

8. Met with New York Times reporter about BTGH campaign, Afghanistan surge and anti-war movement.

9. Board meeting in Portland Maine (site of 2010 VFP convention). We had a very productive meeting and strategy session. We will be putting more emphasis on strengthening our national leadership and prioritizing our programs.

Leah Bolger
October 23, 2009