



Veterans For Peace - Chapter 93

July 2020 Newsletter

... The Utah Phillips – J. David Singer Chapter

Serving Washtenaw, Livingston, Hillsdale, Lenawee and Jackson Counties

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www.vfp93.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/VFP93

1. Veterans For Peace Chapter 93 Meeting – Saturday, July 18th, 2020

The next VFP Chapter 93 meeting will be Saturday, July 18th at 10am. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the meeting will be held by teleconference only using Zoom (<https://zoom.us>). To participate, at 10am, July 18th, if your computer has a microphone and video, go to the Zoom meeting link at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88563866355>. No computer access? Call 312-626-6799 and enter the meeting ID of 885 6386 6355 to join the meeting via phone. Anyone can participate in this meeting, or any other VFP Chapter 93 event, be they veteran or not. The meeting agenda is as follows...

1. Introductions and welcome
2. General Business
 - a. Previous meeting minutes
 - b. Treasury report
 - c. Membership
 - d. [VFP 93 Calendar](#) – Hiroshima/Nagasaki (August 6 & 9), Opt-Out (high school students & military recruiters)
 - e. VFP Outreach – Ann Arbor Green Fair (Cancelled for 2020), Farmers Markets
 - f. Other
3. Old & continuing business
 - a. Honorary Chapter member program
 - b. Truth In Recruiting/Opt-out
 - c. VFP 93 & countering Trump actions locally – 6/20 Ypsilanti Black Lives Matter march report
 - d. VFP Dingell meeting
 - e. VFP at Washtenaw Council of Veterans meetings
 - f. Therapeutic Writing Program
 - g. Other
4. New Business
 - a. Open letter to Japan on the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings
 - b. Other
5. Projects
 - a. Peace Studies Scholarship
 - b. MLK Day
 - c. Peace Pole
 - d. Ann Arbor Art Fair
 - e. John Lennon Concert
 - f. John Lennon Concert CD
 - g. Arlington Michigan
 - h. Other
6. Upcoming events – Next meeting – August 15
7. Announcements/Adjournment

2. Veterans For Peace Chapter 93 Meeting Minutes – June 20, 2020

The meeting took up at 10:02 with Gino Detone, Madeline Diehl, Lynn Gilbert, Bob Krzewinski, Steve Morehouse, Mike Muha, and Bill Shea in attendance. Dave Logsdon, interim Vice President of VFP National, made a virtual visit before leaving to visit the Traverse City chapter.

Dave displayed some two-sided cards with information about VFP that he recommended for use at demos, to explain in short order what VFP is about and stands for. He discussed how to get younger vets, busy with jobs and families, involved in VFP, so that there will be people to take up the cause and replace the elders who mostly now keep it going. He recommended the book *The Big Hike* by Tim Keenan as the testimony of a vet who tackled his fear of going into the woods by hiking the Appalachian Trail. He suggested that Danny Sjursian at the University of Iowa might be a resource for our chapter in approaching universities in the area. He noted that VFP members where he lives, in Minneapolis, have been active in Black Lives Matter demos.

General Business:

- a. The previous meeting's minutes were ok'd.
- b. The treasury has \$8,855.82 in it. Mike reported that CD sales had slowed, with a cumulative total of \$307 to date. BOB will send information to everyone so that they can send an announcement of the CD to their contacts, especially to Madeline and Steve with their big Facebook lists.
- c. Membership is static at 27 with several lapsed. There are still problems getting the honorary memberships listed.
- d. BOB will send out information about a Zoom conference on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- e. Bob sent in \$155.58 to renew the Chapter web page for two years; MIKE will reimburse him.

Old and Continuing Business:

- a. Membership in VFP for the U.-U. Church of Ann Arbor is still on hold because the church is closed.
- b. Today at 2:00 members will take part in a Black Lives Matter march in Ypsilanti at 2:00 p.m., from 229 Michigan Avenue to Depot Town, about three-quarters of a mile.
- c. A meeting with U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell is on hold, but those present discussed the possibility of getting her and U. S. Sen. Gary Peters to co-sponsor legislation that would keep the President from making a first military strike without Congressional authorization. If passed, such a law would protect military personnel who disobey an unlawful order to attack.
- d. STEVE reported that the ship The Golden Rule is stuck in Hawaii but aims to reach Nagasaki this fall; he will send out a link about its progress.
- e. Madeline reported that she will start her therapeutic writing program this fall and needs help with her online platform to test it out.

New Business:

- a. If the Green Fair takes place in Ann Arbor at the Farmers' Market as scheduled on August 14 from 6:00-9:00 p.m., VFP will table there. Bob got an application in.
- b. BILL will find out the status. There are also Farmers' Markets in Ypsi and Chelsea.

Projects:

- a. Those present discussed the pending two applications for Peace Scholarships and decided to award \$1,500 to the one who has a connection with the state of Michigan. MIKE will send a check to Anthony Convertino, who will attend the Ford School of the University of Michigan. BILL will write him a letter to that effect, and respond to the other applicant inquiring if he has any connection to the state; he will also verify whether the London School of Economics, where the applicant proposes to study, actually has a program in conflict resolution.
- b. BILL plans to send out in August notices to Michigan colleges of the availability of the Peace Scholarship.
- c. c. MLK Day: the Chapter plans to continue to speak at this year's three venues, the U. of M., E.M.U., and the Ann Arbor public library.
- d. MIKE will confer with Fred Pierson at Wayne State as to an alternative site for installation of the Peace Pole that had been destined for W.S.U. The installation cost there is prohibitive. Perhaps the nearby Methodist Church would welcome it, or another church near Wayne State.
- e. There will be no Art Fairs in Ann Arbor this summer.
- f. The John Lennon Concert is still planned for October at The Ark, although the latter is not open for in-person events.
- g. The Concert CD has licensing problems with putting out a down-loadable version; MIKE will look into solutions.
- h. Arlington Michigan on July 4: Scott Saelzler of the Detroit Chapter is working on a permit for the display in Grand Circus Park from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Set up will take place at 10:00 a.m. MIKE will bring CDs and other merchandize. STEVE volunteered to help with publicity in Detroit; Gino, as a younger vet, will be encouraged to participate.
- i. Mike reported that the U.-U. Church, where the Chapter normally meets, will remain closed through August at least. MIKE will look into Google Classroom and Google Meet, on behalf of the veterans Therapeutic Writing Program.
- j. Bill said that Ann Arbor Parks and Rec will permit VFP to use Veterans Park in November when they receive the \$125 fee, which hopefully can be refunded after Veterans Day. MIKE will send them a check.

Meeting:

- a. The next meeting will be virtual on July 18 at 10:00 a.m.
- b. This meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

3. Report - VFP Arlington Michigan Display In Downtown Detroit On July 4th



VFP Chapters 74 (Metro Detroit) and 93 set up the Veterans For Peace Arlington Michigan display (one marker for every Michigan soldier killed in the Afghan and Iraq wars) in downtown Detroit on July 4, Independence Day up from 11am to 5pm, in downtown Detroit's Grand Circus Park. The display was supposed to be held on Memorial Day in May, but was postponed due to the pandemic and the associated "stay-home" directives.

It just so happened that a Detroit "Freedom March" held a noon event starting from Grand Circus Park to Campus Martius so around 100+ participants were made aware of Veterans For Peace and the purpose of Arlington Michigan (to honor those who have fallen, to provide a place to grieve, and to educate the public about the costs of war, as well as the needs of those returning from conflicts). A special thanks go to the [Swords Into Plowshares Peace Center & Gallery](#) across the street from the display who remained open for the day to provide refreshments and restrooms while also allowing visitors to view the "Visions Of Peace" exhibit by young artists. The next planned display of Arlington Michigan will be on Saturday, November 11th (Armistice Day – Veterans Day) at Veterans Park in Ann Arbor. to honor those who have fallen, to provide a place to grieve, and to educate the public about the costs of war, as well as the needs of those returning from conflicts

4. Ann Arbor Fisher House Opens



On June 1st, the Ann Arbor Fisher House opened up which gives veterans and their families a place to stay while receiving care at the Ann Arbor Veterans Administration Hospital and which our VFP Chapter gave a donation to. The VA Ann Arbor Fisher House is the first Fisher House to be built in the state of Michigan. Construction on the VA Ann Arbor Fisher House began in late April 2019 and the groundbreaking ceremony took place June 14, 2019. The Fisher House Foundation constructed the house and gifted it to the U.S.

Department of Veterans Affairs upon its completion on April 20, 2020.

The VA Ann Arbor Fisher House will enable family members to be close to their loved one during a hospitalization by providing comfortable, cost free lodging, in a relaxed setting that is only a short walk away from the VA Ann Arbor Medical Center. If you would like to learn more about the VA Ann Arbor Fisher House, make a donation, or download a copy of the brochure, please view the Fisher House webpage at this link:

http://www.annarbor.va.gov/services/VAAHHS_Fisher_House.asp

5. Veterans For Peace Minnesota Online Peacestock 2020 Celebration July 18th

Veterans for Peace Chapter 115 in Red Wing, Minnesota, is excited to announce that the 18th annual [PEACESTOCK](#) will be held online via Zoom on Saturday, July 18, 2020 beginning at 1:00 pm CDT (EDT 2:00 pm and PDT 11:00 am). This year's Peacestock theme "Where's the Truth?" will be addressed by two nationally known writers/speakers, Andrew J. Bacevich and Norman Solomon. Peacestock is an annual event sponsored by Veterans for Peace Chapter 115 in Red Wing and Chapter 27 in Minneapolis/St. Paul. This annual event includes speakers, activists, and musicians that center their messages around issues related to Peace and Justice. The event is free but registration required to receive Zoom information ([Register here](#)). Donations are also very much appreciated.

6. VFP National Online Convention – August 2-9th

Registration is now open! This year's online convention (there will not be any physical event – everything will be online only) will highlight work being done to address nuclear weapons as well as nuclear colonialism and broader topics such as what decolonizing the peace movement looks like and highlight some of the amazing work being done within Veterans For Peace.

Featuring Key Note Speaker Dahr Jamail. In late 2003, weary of the overall failure of the US media to accurately report on the realities of the war in Iraq for the Iraqi people, Dahr Jamail went to the Middle East to report on the war himself, where he has spent more than one year in Iraq as one of only a few independent US journalists in the country. Dahr has also reported from Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. He has also reported extensively on veterans' resistance against US foreign policy, and is now focusing on anthropogenic climate disruption and the environment.

For more information on the 2020 VFP online convention, and how to register, visit

<https://vfp2020.attendase.com>

7. What Happens To Veterans' Healthcare Post-COVID-19?

From the Chicago Crusader: - "In the years after my military service in Iraq, I have walked the few blocks from my apartment to the Manhattan Veterans Affairs Medical Center hundreds of times to see my healthcare providers," wrote Essam Attia in an op-ed at The Independent. "As I shelter-in-place in the American epicenter of the world's worst pandemic in 100 years, I am, however, worried the VA will be unable to fulfill its missions to care for future generations of veterans or serve civilian sector patients in a national emergency."

Attia joined Suzanne Gordon on the America's Heroes Group on May 16 to discuss the pandemic's impact on veterans, and the future of veterans' healthcare amid an historic staff shortage at the Department of Veterans Affairs. For years, the VA's Veterans Health Administration has faced privatization attacks from for-profit healthcare leaders as well as lawmakers. Suzanne Gordon, a journalist, spent five years inside the VA documenting its unique healthcare delivery programs as well as the efforts to privatize the agency. In her two books, *Wounds of War* and *The Battle for Veterans Healthcare*, Gordon uncovers why the VA – the closest thing the U.S. has to a national health care system – is so important to veterans and how it benefits everyone. But several recent pieces of legislation threaten to dismantle the system.

"The MISSION Act has only made things worse," Attia said. "Because so much money and energy has been devoted to sending veterans to the private sector, there has been little left to fill the 50,000 vacancies at the Veterans Health Administration." Gordon has also coauthored a report "The VA Vacancy Crisis" on the VA's 50,000 staff vacancies on behalf of the Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute, a non-partisan, non-profit organization that studies ways to improve veterans' healthcare.

"In interviews, scores of VHA staff have described the many challenges that make it more and more difficult for them to care for some of the nation's most complex patients," Gordon writes with her co-author, Jasper Craven. "They told us about short staffing, anemic budgets, poor – and even punitive – management practices, and, sometimes, even downright hostility from high level administrators, the media, and Congress."

The Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute team reached out to the Trump administration several times for comment on these issues, but the VA did not reply to any of the inquiries. "[The Choice program and MISSION ACT] process was supposed to be both hassle-free and free of charge and I was supposed to get high-quality care in the private sector. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie assured veterans that the VA wouldn't be privatized and I'd still be able to get the same quality of care I'd received for the past 12 years," said Attia. "That's not quite how it worked out."

8. AARP Veteran Information Sources

The AARP has a number of resources available for veterans including...

- [Free COVID Resources for Veterans, Military and Their Families](#)
- [Learn 5 Tips for Military Veteran Caregivers Amid the Pandemic](#)
- [The Top Scams Targeting Veterans](#)
- [Find Employers Actively Seeking to Hire Veterans](#)

For even more resources for veterans and their families visit www.aarp.org/home-family/voices/veterans

9. Announcement, Anniversaries & Reminders

[August 5 \(Wednesday\) – Hiroshima & Nagasaki – Sharing A Message Of Peace](#)

Event via Zoom will be held on August 5 to share a message of peace with audiences from different cities. August 5, 2020 at 9:30am EDT (August 5, 10:30pm in Japan) [Register in advance for this meeting](#)

[August 9 \(Sunday\) – Witness To Hiroshima Online Program](#)

The [Women's International League for Peace and Freedom](#) present a webinar (Zoom link [here](#)) with survivor Dr. Hideko Tamura sharing her personal experiences from before, during, and after the August 6 Hiroshima atom bombing. The webinar starts at 6pm EDT.

[VFP John Lennon Birthday Benefit Concert Now On CD](#)

In April 2020, our Veterans For Peace Chapter released a compact disc (CD) recording of the musical artists performing at our October John Lennon Birthday Benefit Concerts over the years for our Chapter's Peace Scholarship program. And like the Concert, a purchase of the CD also goes to benefit the Peace Scholarship program.

Selections on the CD include Revolution (Chris Buhalis, Peter "Madcat" Ruth), Maggie Mae (Dave Boutette, Peter "Madcat" Ruth, Dave Keeney), You've Go To Hide Your Love Away (Annie & Rod Capps, Jason Dennie), Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds (Billy King with Emily Slomovits and band), In My Life (Emily Slomovits with Billy King), Dear Prudence (Jo Serrapere), Across The Universe (Jen Sygit), Rest Easy Little Darlin (John Latini), Crippled Inside (Dave Keeney, Sophia Hanfi), Working Class Hero (Rochelle Clark), Come Together (Shari Kane and Dave Steele) and Imagine (Billy King).

The John Lennon Birthday Benefit Concert CD can be purchased for \$15, plus \$3 for shipping, by PayPal by visiting www.vfp93.org/john-lennon-concert-cd.

Veterans For Peace National Weekly E-News List

Get updates on upcoming VFP national actions, ongoing campaigns and news from chapters across the country. Additionally, the e-news provides resources and helpful tips for engaging your own actions. To sign up visit <https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/eblast0/index.html>

Our VFP Chapter Can Use Your Help

Currently our VFP Chapter has only a few people doing all the work and projects and to say we could use help is an understatement. Most of these jobs don't take up that much time at all, and would help out the Chapter immensely. One thing we are trying to promote is for people to sign up for a "volunteer email list". We always need extra people to help staff events like the Arlington Michigan display on Memorial/Veterans Day or the VFP booth at Earth Day or the Ann Arbor Art Fair. Just tell us you want to be on the volunteer e-mail list and when an event date starts rolling around, we will email you to see if you can help out. If you can, great. If not, we understand. Even if you are not a veteran, we could still use your help. To be placed on the "volunteer email list", just send an email to Bob Krzewinski at wolverbob@gmail.com and he will get back in touch with you. Thanks in advance for your consideration of this request!!!

VFP National Online Social Hours

VFP has experimented with VFP Social Hours and members enjoyed the chance to chat and catch up (or meet) with other Veterans For Peace members. VFP will continue these twice a week every Tuesday and Thursday at 2 pm. (EDT). VFP will post the "Join" link in the Calendar section on the right side of the front page of our website - www.veteransforpeace.org - before every Social Hour.

Support Those Who Supported Us For Our John Lennon Concert!

We again thank our musical artists who are contributing their talent to make our 2019 John Lennon benefit concert a success and urge you to support them throughout the year by attending their performances and purchasing their recordings. Visit <https://www.vfp93.org/john-lennon-concert> for a listing of concert musicians.

VFP 93 On Facebook

Veterans For Peace Chapter 93 now has a Facebook page. To sign up, just visit <https://www.facebook.com/VFP93>

Car Donations To Help The Chapter

If anyone has a car to donate, the Chapter would appreciate it be given to Charity Motors 888-908-2277. They pick it up anywhere and will give 70% of the sell price to our Chapter. The car can be in any condition.

Michigan Peace Network - <http://michiganpeacenetwork.org/>

Metro Detroit VFP Chapter

The Metro Detroit Chapter of Veterans For Peace covers Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Monroe Counties and also has regular meetings. For more information visit www.vfp74.org.

A Simple Way To Promote VFP - Wear Your VFP T-Shirt!

Help spread the word about Veterans For Peace by wearing a VFP t-shirt, sweatshirt or button around your town or in your travels. Not only does this introduce the public to the fact that there are veterans who stand for peace but can help bring additional veterans into the organization. Don't have a VFP t-shirt or button? Order them by visiting <http://veterans-for-peace-onlinestore.myshopify.com> (<https://veteransforpeace.salsalabs.org/eblast0/index.html> (secure, online sales available)).