

Executive Director Report - Convention 2022

Despite lingering COVID impacts, massive inflation, and an escalating war in Ukraine and other areas, in the last year VFP has:

- **Held its first electronic ballot election** with over a 35% increase in voter participation.
- **Transitioned to a new database** to streamline data collection and reporting tools that can make organizing more effective and reduce costs.
- **Grown an active Discord** server with over 400 young veterans and allies.
- **Secured grant funding** to partially fund localized actions to spread the word about the intersections between climate crisis and militarism.

VFP has responded in amazing ways and local chapters, dedicated members, a hard working staff and committed allies continue to organize and push for peace.

Managing Staff & Office

- For the first time while I have been ED, VFP had to reduce staff hours to part time to be able to make payroll. There was considerable strain on staff this year due to financial deficits. VFP staff remains in the lower 10% of salaries for similar sized non-profits in the U.S.
- VFP transitioned to a new database called EveryAction. The process was complicated due to the fact we were initially operating from two different databases and had been for many years. This not only meant transferring large amounts of data and cleaning it up, it also meant that we had to examine our processes. In many ways we had to reinvent the ways we looked at membership levels and tracking. The effort was stalled when a system wide bug hit the membership module of all the EA clients. The database transition has been attempted before and when it is finally completed we will have accomplished a major goal that has plagued VFP for at least 8 years. Planning for the Convention and making sure it is a success has taken a large amount of our staff's focus and time recently, but through that we have still devoted a lot of time and energy to the database transition, and will continue to do so after the conclusion of the Convention.
- When I was hired in 2019 VFP had 7 personnel on the national staff. At the beginning of 2022, we also had 7 staff members, however Colleen Kelly has recently resigned as Communications Director. We will conduct a hiring process for a Communications Associate. In the meantime, communications tasks will be spread through staff, comms committee and our amazing contracted editor Becky Luening.

Staff Roster Includes

- **Shelly Rockett - Business Manager** - Primary financial manager, controls the database of record, maintains HR roles, bottom lines most administrative functions
- **Samantha Ferguson- Communications and Graphic Design Coordinator** - Produces graphic and media content that unifies the VFP brand and gives communications and actions a professional touch. Website development and maintenance. Supports many comms roles and is actively involved in supporting program organizing.
- **Jules Vaquera- Membership Coordinator** - Connects with members through new member support, chapter contacts and independent member coordinations. Improves internal communications connecting members and informing leaders about opportunities to engage and grow VFP engagement.
- **Chris Velazquez- Digital Organizer** - Growing the Gamers For Peace initiative by bottomlining twitch streaming programs and supporting the Discord community. Engages potential members on social media platforms to build membership and engagement. Helps improve organizational technical tools to keep up with modern organizing.
- **Gail Aquino- Part Time Administrative Office Staff** - Processes checks, mail, new member and donor paperwork. Updates the database of records as necessary. Completes store shipments and supports administrative tasks. Answers member calls and emails.
- **Garett Reppenhagen - Executive Director** - Watches in amazement at the incredible work the VFP team does day in and day out to keep the organization advancing our critical mission.

Budget

- The VFP board revised the 2022 budget and passed a decreased budget of \$497,000.

VFP has not had a year with actual expenses below \$500K since 2013.

Despite cutting over \$120k out of expenses in two years we have not been able to stabilize the budget.

We have now depleted savings and might not be in a position to hire a new comms staff member and could actually need to consider further staff reductions.

Below is a historical look at VFP finances based on the 990s and 3rd party accountant financial reviews from 2013-2022.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Expenses	\$457k	\$537k	\$547k	\$902k	\$670k	\$643k	\$654K	\$587k	\$525k	\$497k
Contributions	\$474k	\$595k	\$490k	\$1,12kk	\$588k	\$586k	\$498K	\$541k	\$435k	\$497k
Cash Flow Diff.	\$18k	\$59	-\$58k	\$221k	-\$112k	-\$58k	-\$156k	-\$46k	-\$89k	\$0.00

*2021 is based of combined monthly statements

*2022 is based off the current approved budget

*2016 VFP received a \$200,000 grant for a the Veterans Challenge Islamophobia Project and a \$250,000 donation from Sally-Alice Thompson

2022 Financials

2022	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May*	Jun*	Jul	TOTAL	Projected 2022	2022 Budget
Member Dues	14,529	8,646	11,315	16,643	5,393	5,393	4,067	65,986	113,118	133,335
Donations	65,023	9,164	10,770	38,491	35,702	35,702	3,250	198,102	339,603	316,736
Other Income	873	2,267	1,777	4,728	2,406	2,406	16,099	30,556	52,381	71,090
Expenses	38,133	37,864	54,472	42,033	36,655	36,655	33,673	279,485	483,262	497,000
Total	42,292	(17,787)	(30,610)	17,829	6,846	6,846	(10,257)	15,159	25,987	24,161

* May and June were averaged off the difference of the YTD totals at the end of July.

*Projected totals is based on the current YTD total divided by the current months in the year multiplied by the full 12 months annually.

- Despite board votes and agreements, the funding for an organizational audit has not been able to be raised and is currently on hold.

Unrestricted Savings and Checking from 2020-Current

	7/1/2020	7/1/2021	7/1/2022	8/24/22
Checking	\$31k	\$68k	\$25k	\$24k
Savings	\$63k	\$59k	\$41k	\$43k
Total Unrestricted \$	\$94k	\$127k	\$66k	\$67K

- SEE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Board Support

- A lot of work has been put into creating a more standardized shared document system through GoogleDocs.
- Many board committees are facilitated by VFP staff and have become critical to organizing work in the organization.
- The ED and staff continue to support the board in meetings, tech resources, document storage and communication to members.
- Annual elections are administered by national office staff
- The annual convention takes an enormous amount of staff time and resources.

Chapter/Member Support

- At the end of 2021 VFP conducted our first-ever online elections and voting system. It was a massive effort that increased our member voting by 35%. It was extremely costly because of the amount of unused mailed ballots that still went out. We will reduce this cost this year by having members who have not previously voted, but had the opportunity to vote, fill out a voter registration to get a mailed ballot. All eligible members will have multiple opportunities to vote electronically without the need to register.
- The elections were costly, but successful. **855 Ballots counted. 193 of those were paper ballots.** Out of 2,924 eligible voters. Over 2,000 ballots were printed and mailed.
- Last election was costly on printing and mailing paper ballots. So we will have a voter registration period before ballots go out—starting mid summer. You will need to register if you did not vote in 2021. Everyone, regardless of registering, will get an electronic ballot. Only people who either didn't vote previously and registered or people who voted (electronically or by paper) last year but didn't vote electronically yet in this coming election will get paper ballots. The digital voting starts 3-4 weeks before we mail ballots—allowing us to take off folks that voted already from our list for printing and mailing a paper ballot.
 - ElectionBuddy sent nine international letters and ballots at \$2.99 per item, and 2336 domestic letters and ballots at \$1.99 per item, for a total cost of \$4675.55 + Expert Setup with Voter Inquiry Management \$2,297.00
 - **Total for election was almost \$7k**
 - Total spent in 2020 **\$3,754.61**
- We continue to have monthly Chapter Contact and New Member Orientation calls. Our independent member calls will shift to regional VFP calls to help build local support for shrinking chapters and booster events.
- Membership Numbers: The combination of merging two complicated databases into one, some inaccurate data from the past, and the lapse in reporting due to

the actual technical database transition have made it difficult to get an accurate count at the moment, but we are focused on taking the time during our transition to get accurate data and putting systems in place for the future rather than rushing through the process.

- SEE MEMBERSHIP REPORT for full numbers.
- We are seeking new ways to provide chapters the support they need to grow membership, provide structure and share information.

Communications

- Enews, newsletters, social media and direct emails have been consistent throughout the year.
- VFP will launch a Discord community that will give a platform for younger members to continue organizational discussions and campaign efforts outside of the GFP Discord.
- The organization will reduce the number of newsletters and instead make the end of the year appeal a combined appeal and newsletter.
- The loss of the Communications Director will mean additional responsibilities from other staff, but there will be a reduction in the regularity and quality of communications for at least a limited time.
- Samantha and a great team of members are working on a new website that should be unveiled in the new year.

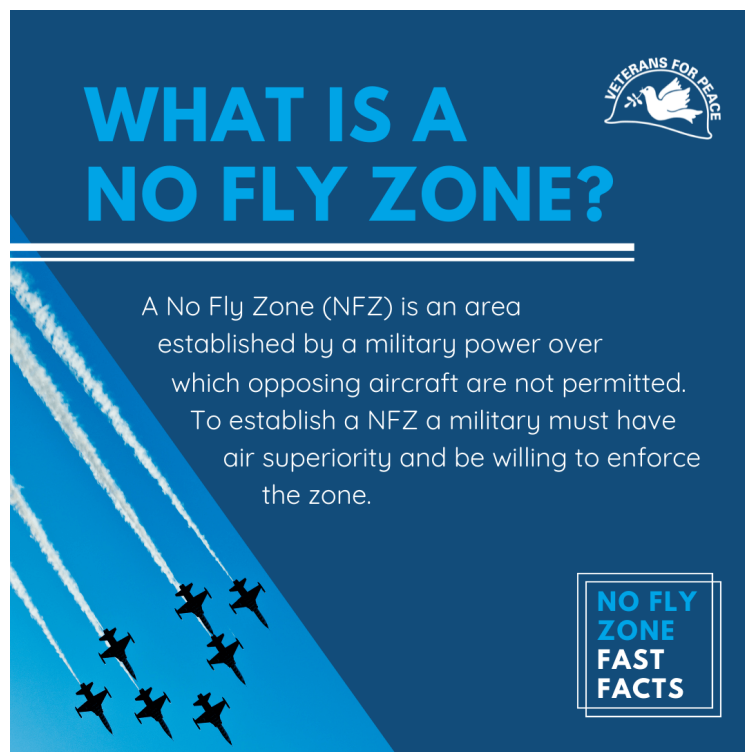
Fundraising

- Active organizing, mobilization, direct action and visible VFP events have helped bring in more donations and grant funding. Keep up the great work! We are supported with contributions because people need us to stop U.S. militarism.
- A handful of grants have been acquired this year that have supported the general operating budget and specific efforts like the climate actions we are organizing around the country. We continue to improve the grant writing process. The largest barrier is being invited to submit proposals since most foundations will not take unsolicited requests. We need to build relationships with foundation boards and staff.
- A great message from Jane Fonda at the end of last year helped boost numbers.
- Some board members are stepping up and helping with grants and donor calls.
- We need to rebuild a fundraising culture in VFP that has been lacking for many years.
- SEE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Program

There is too much incredible work done by VFP members and coalitions to recount in one report. Here is a sample of the great stuff VFP members, chapters, projects and groups are involved in:

- As the horrendous Russian military siege endures, VFP was quick to assist with [education around NO-FLY-ZONES](#) and how they are acts of war and require offensive military strikes to maintain. VFP held [opinion editorial writing courses](#) to help members get published locally.



- [Gamers For Peace](#) continues to grow with more and more young members joining VFP through gaming and gaming adjacent spaces. There are currently almost 500 members on the server. Many of which have not heard of VFP until joining and are starting to convert into members of VFP. Almost all of which are under 40 and are post 9-11 veterans. GFP is Veterans For Peace leading initiative for Truth In Recruitment.



- An effort to organize Nonviolent Direct Actions around Climate and Militarism and ending current military conflicts is being organized with an opening event in Washington DC around tabling the Rage Against the Machine concerts. Almost 30 members blocked an intersection at the US Capitol for 30 minutes resulting in 7 members being arrested. Join the [organizing calls](#) and we can help you create an action locally near you and figure out how we can support it with additional members.



- About 30 Veterans For Peace members joined the **Anti-Militarism contingent at the Poor People's Campaign** Moral March and Assembly in Washington DC June 17-19th. We participated in a meeting with our allies from Military Families Speak Out, volunteered for communal meals, marched, gathered and celebrated. Highlights included a confrontational peace illumination at the MLK memorial,

fantastic banners and the drone model at the massive assembly and seeing so many members in person. It is great to mobilize once again.



- In the beginning of 2022 VFP held a concert to raise awareness, called the Climate Crisis and The War Machine Music Video Contest, that included prizes for performers who made the best music videos. [WATCH IT HERE](#)

CLIMATE CRISIS & THE WAR MACHINE
Music Video Contest Concert

Featuring Performers:

- Dilson Hernandez
- Ben Grosscup
- Ray Sol
- Phil Pflager
- Colleen Kattau
- and more!

February 12th
7pm ET | 6pm CT | 4pm PT

Tune in as we announce the contest winners, air the winning music videos and hear other songs from the winners and other performers!

WAR INDUSTRY RESISTERS NETWORK

- VFP was an active partner in the [War Industry Resisters Network](#) and housed the webpage on the VFP website. We worked with over 30 different groups organizing actions and events in more than 20 locations around the US opposing the military industry war profiteering. The work is still ongoing and we look forward to continuing to organize with such a great coalition.