

Executive Director Report Convention 2021

Managing Staff

- Two new hires help VFP office with capacity and to concentrate in growing and supporting membership and chapters and expanding organizing into social media and digital species. VFP hired Digital Organizer, Chris Velazquez, and a full-time Membership Coordinator, Jules Vaquera.
- [Casey Stinemetz](#) has decreased hours but maintains supporting administrative and organizing functions.
- Hazel Diaz completed her part time role as a Resource Development Director and we remain in contact for advice and assistance.
- VFP closed the office on N Broadway in St Louis and moved into a cost-effective shared office space. The majority of all work is now done from home.
- Staff have a staff meeting/“study hall” to coordinate work 3 days a week, utilizing Fridays to complete training discussions on better organizer practices.
- We are preparing to examine the Employee Handbook to see if there are additional updates to modernize HR functions.

Staff Roster Includes

- **Shelly Rocket - Business Manager** - Primary financial manager, controls the database of record, maintains HR roles, bottom lines most administrative functions
- **Colleen Kelly - Communications Director** - Heads communication plans and efforts including Enews, newsletter, social media, earned media and more. Is the primary program manager helping to organize projects and campaigns. Functions as an overall program director despite comms title.
- [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.
- [Gail Aquino](#)- **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.
- [Casey Stinemetz](#)- **Administrative Assistant** - Fulfills technical tasks, improving VFP processes and assists with program coordination.
- [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.
- **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 board passed a balanced budget of **\$584,000** in December for this year. The previous year (2020) VFP expenses were just shy of **\$490,000**. With the current levels of expenses we are closer to the budget of last year however there will be additional expenses supporting a Creech AFB protest and an organizer gathering in September.
- Last year VFP had a surplus of **\$57,720** by year's end. In 2018 the organization ended the year with a **-\$61,000** loss, in 2019 **-\$177,000**.
- Last year VFP took advantage of the PayRoll Protection Loan that we were not qualified to receive again in 2021. Additional appeals and larger donors came through to help as well as a successful online convention and reduction of overhead.
- Having the increased staff is a larger payroll responsibility but the increased capacity allows us to organize better and affords staff time to accomplish tasks that reduce cost. (i.e. Sam building the convention website and working on a full VFP site rebuild)
- This year will be challenging to keep on budget while starting to travel and support physical mobilizations.
- It is unclear how COVID variants and economic factors will impact donations and activity.
- SEE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Board Support

- There was a concerted effort to strengthen board committees as some of the core operations resources of VFP. Staff and member volunteers have been added to grow capacity and diverse voices. The additional committee members will allow continuity of work as board members transition and incorporate views of chapter leaders and independent members. As a result the Membership and Communications committee has grown and is starting to be more utilized to improve VFP. There is still a long way to go to get these bodies optimized. Additional committees need this intentional growth and support as well.

- The board created a full Strategic Planning and Transformative Justice Committee to fill in gaps of board responsibilities.
- The ED and staff continue to support the board in meetings, tech resources, document storage and communication to members.

Chapter/Member support

- We continue to have monthly Chapter Contact, Independent Member and New Member Orientation calls.
- We have almost 400 post 9/11 members in VFP that Jules has started conducting a formal Listening Project that involves one-on-ones to compile data and build relationships with our younger members.
- We are seeking new ways to provide chapters the support they need to grow membership, provide structure and share information to their members.

Communications

- Enews, newsletters, social media and direct emails have been consistent throughout the year.
- VFP-ALL email listserv was started for google groups. There is still a low reup rate from the yahoo list previously. There were strong demands from members to automatically port the full yahoo list into the google list, instead, to ensure members were joining based on consent, multiple attempts to encourage members to join the new listserv were made..
- VFP started a SLACK platform also to increase internal member communications. It has also seen low participation and signups.
- With Chris on staff as a Digital Organizer we will not only use social media as a communications platform, but also organize directly to engage potential members and increase member engagement in campaigns and projects.

Fundraising

- After a very solid 2021 numbers have fallen back to more predictable levels. It has become more difficult to focus on resource development tasks and very little effort has been placed on grant writing or courting large donors. A good portion of energy at the end of the year will be required to raise operating funds.
- The VFP Store converted over to a print-on-demand platform to allow for more flexibility in products, less risk in merchandise overhead, less office space required to store products and less staff time needed to process, package and ship items.
- VFP organized a handful of musical online concerts featuring popular musicians and allies that helped raise funds. Digital efforts to reach out during Armistice Day and Giving Tuesday helped increase new giving opportunities.

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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:

- Gamers For Peace launched earlier this year and has grown into an impressive initiative with close to 20 hours of original content a week broadcasted on Twitch and a robust community on Discord. Using gaming and streaming platforms to confront militarism and recruitment online.
- The Reclaim Armistice Day campaign is moving forward with the goal to get 11 municipalities to include naming Veterans Day, Armistice Day.
- Climate and Militarism Project has become an official VFP national project and is conducting a music video contest to build awareness and create artistic media we can use to educate the public.
- SOVA is active with calls-to-action and building toward the second lobbying flyin for Feb. 2022
- DVAP joined the Leave No One Behind mural project and VFP created an original mural in DC to backdrop a press conference. Recent movement in the President's position might indicate more veterans returning home soon. No Nukes working group is organizing again and the Golden Rule has come back to the US after being daunted by COVID-19 lockdowns across the Pacific regions. They plan on completing a domestic loop through the Great Lakes, Mississippi River and Atlantic Coast.



- VFP will join CodePink once again at Creech AFB September 26-Oct 2 for a week-long mobilization camping and conducting actions at the front gates of the drone operator base in Nevada.
- Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign has put forward the first federal legislation written by VFP members and has been organizing to build congressional support for the bill.

2021-2022

Work Plan with a concentration on building stronger organizing culture

- campaign development
- pathways to participate
- continued skill training
- communities of solidarity
- consistent & principled action
- leadership development
- deep relationship building

Look at what programs match internal goals and growth and how we can merge the two more.

Organizational Audit

- Full analysis of operations and community
 - DEI
 - Legal
 - Financial
 - Structure
 - Employee HR

Convention

- Costs
- Effectiveness
- FILL OUT THE EVALUATION and JOIN the committee to access the program

Website

- In house transition
- member content

Elections

- online?

Database

- Streamlining