



VANA UPDATE
January 2004 Vol. 15, No. 1
c/o D. Morgan, 7678 Davies Street, Burnaby, BC V3N 3H4
Web Site: www.vana.ca
PLEASE NOTE NEW ADDRESS ABOVE



Letter from Your Executive

Dear Fellow VANA Members:

It is easy to lose sight of the fact that VANA is an organization of enormous value. From our position of familiarity, we may sometimes take the concept of VANA for granted. But to many, especially young people, the idea that there is an organization of veterans who are opposed to the insanity of nuclear war is enormously encouraging, inspiring and refreshing. Just by existing, we are an inspiration to the peace movement. When we speak as members of VANA, we have one-hundred times the clout that we have as individuals. However, as our energies decline we need to think about our existence as an organization and to consider new ways of operating.

VANA's involvement in The Memory Project is a good example of our new way of operating. This organization is eager to help veterans present their military experiences in the schools. They make all of the contacts and arrangements. All we have to do is contact them, learn their routines and show up. Also part of our new way of operating is that our *Update* newsletter has moved back "in-house" and from now on will come to you six-times-per-year from our BC branch.

In this first national *Update* from BC we tackle a review of the dark shadows and bright sunshine of the year 2003. This past year saw a dangerous drift towards militarism, international lawlessness and anarchy, but it also saw an incredible surge in the world public's rejection of these trends.

A meeting in Washington DC, discussing this dangerous drift, were some of the most illustrious and knowledgeable experts on the nuclear weapon threat, at a symposium hosted by Helen Caldicott's recently formed Nuclear Policy Research Institute. Your President David Morgan sent a letter of congratulation on this very important symposium to Dr. Caldicott. She graciously accepted Honorary

VANA Membership when she spoke in Vancouver on 28 April 2003

This drift towards militarism and anarchy has seen a decline in trust between Washington and other capitals. Canada has not escaped the drift towards militarism and anarchy. Our armed forces are currently in Afghanistan with no UN or international law mandate. This overt trend began with Canada's lawless participation in the bombing of Yugoslavia on 24 March 1999. Few Canadians are aware of the extent to which Canada has exchanged its blue UN helmet for a khaki one. Our recently expressed willingness to join in the ballistic missile defence program is a stark example. VANA member Mark Frank's letter below regarding the misuse of Canada Pension Plan funds, illustrates another aspect of this drift.

Finally, your exec joins in wishing you a happy and peaceful New Year. Please send in your news, views, questions and motions. Your executive will consider any written motion, signed by a seconder, and report on it.

Note: Your membership dues of \$30. for 2004 should be sent to: Shayle Duffield, RR1 Z-46, Bowen Island, BC, V0N 1G0. If you have missed a few years and lost track, forget the past and start afresh with this year's dues

Yours sincerely,

Dave Morgan, President and Newsletter Editor (604)-525-7147, Fax: (604)-525-7148, -ail:daimorgan@shaw.ca, 7678 Davies Street, Burnaby, BC V3N 3H4
Cynthia Llewellyn Secretary, Ted Powis Treasurer, Bas Robinson, Membership Coordinator. At Large: Ed Shaffer, Ed Livingston, Kell Antoft, Walter Josephy and Cec Muldrew

We regret to announce the names of these members no longer with us:

Nigel Nixon, Vancouver (1923 - 2003)

Harvey Burt, North Vancouver (1920 - 2003)

VANA: A New Way of Operating

World War II ended nearly sixty years ago. Since most VANA members are World War-II vets, most of us are in our 80s. This means that we have less energy to attend meetings and demonstrations, circulate petitions, organize rallies and public events, etc. If the threats from nuclear weapons were vanishing, we would all be glad to end our efforts in VANA and spend more time with our grandchildren. But since these threats are certainly not vanishing and even seem to be growing, the need for our efforts to protect those grandchildren is inescapable.

So the problem is this: With our diminished energy how can we keep working effectively? There seem to be at least two main answers. (Please send in your ideas too).

1. To "piggy-back" on other peace and social justice organizations.
2. To operate proudly as an "Armchair-Veteran" in the on-going battle of ideas.

1. Piggy-back activism: Members of several VANA branches which no longer hold monthly

meetings join the meetings of other peace and social justice organizations. VANA Edmonton, for instance, holds monthly meetings with Ploughshares, as do VANA Saskatoon (who alternately chair these meetings) and VANA Toronto. The peace coalitions which organized the big marches early last year continue to function, and VANA members are involved. In Vancouver, Stopwar.ca meets every two weeks with VANA members present. VANA Saskatoon belongs to the Saskatoon Peace Coalition. Members also work widely through political, labour and church organizations.

2. Armchair-Veteran activism: The role of "Armchair Veteran" is one of dignity and honour. It is also a role of increasing power. Hand-written letters have always had power. But today, a telephone call to an open-line show can command a huge and widespread audience. Faxes, e-mail and our excellent web site (<http://vana.ca>) extend these powers much further. When exercising these powers don't forget to mention your membership in VANA. It adds greatly to your clout and credibility.

The Word of the U.S. President, Then and Now.

During the Cuban missile crisis forty-one year ago, President Kennedy sent former secretary of state Dean Acheson to Paris to brief French President Charles de Gaulle and solicit his support.

"At the end of the briefing, Acheson said to de Gaulle, "I would now like to show you the evidence, the photographs that we have of Soviet missiles armed with nuclear weapons." The French president responded, "I do not wish to see the photographs. The word of the president of the United States is good

enough for me. Please tell him that France stands with America."

"Would any foreign leader today react the same way to an American emissary sent abroad to say that country X is armed with weapons of mass destruction that threaten the United States? It is unlikely. The recent conduct of U.S. foreign policy, by distorting the threats facing America, has isolated the United States and undermined its credibility. It has damaged our ability to deal with issues in North Korea, Iran, Russia and the West Bank. If a case ever needs to be made for action against a truly imminent threat, will any nation take us seriously?" (Zbigniew Brzezinski)

Memory Project

“The Memory Project Speakers' Bureau is a database of military service men and women from across Canada. They have been prepared through Dominion Institute workshops to visit classrooms and share their personal stories with your students.” (From: www.thememoryproject.com)

The Memory Project, A Report to VANA by Woodrow Coward BC VANA member, 15 June 2003

The Dominion Institute is a charitable organization which was founded in 1997 by a group of young people concerned about the decline of history as a core subject in Ontario schools. Education is a Provincial matter, hence curricula concerning history and Canada's involvement in historical events varies considerably from province to province. The Dominion Institute is funded by The Ontario Government, with additional support from charitable foundations and individuals primarily based in Ontario. It also receives some funding from the federal government. It created "The Memory Project" which has operated a "speakers' bureau" in Ontario serving primary, and secondary schools primarily.

The Memory Project's Manager Jessica Humphreys directed the Vancouver Workshop. She quoted impressive statistics of the Project's operation over the past six years in the province of Ontario. This success caused the Institute to explore the possibility of expanding The Memory Project operation into a truly National operation. We were informed that workshops similar to that conducted in Vancouver have been held in Alberta and perhaps other western provinces. A representative of The Vancouver Institute was present, presumably to observe the kind of activity in which the Dominion Institute is involved.

My impression is that the Project is operated on a well organized and professional basis and has enjoyed considerable success in its contacts with School Boards, teachers and teachers organizations. There were about 60 participants in the Vancouver Workshop. The main presenter was Charles Hou a retired BC Secondary History Teacher who has also authored two history books. Mr. Hou was not a veteran but his father was. His contribution primarily dealt with "Methods of Instruction" and is useful to the uninitiated. A guest speaker was Commander Kelly E Williams, currently serving with Canada's Naval Forces (Commander of HMCS Winnipeg) which recently returned from station in the Persian Gulf.

The aim of the workshop was to instruct potential participants as "speakers" on a Speakers' Bureau in on how to organize and conduct a "presentation". Workshop participants were invited to give examples of the type of personal war experiences they had. Those of us who have been involved with veterans groups are familiar with the temptation of veterans (particularly aging ones) to tell their favorite war story to a captive audience. This occurred in response to Mr. Hou's suggestion that it was helpful to personalize one's presentation. It was at this point that I chose to intercede. As the purpose of this entire exercise is ostensibly to enhance students' knowledge of "history". I warned against any suggestion that war was either glamorous or "fun". I suggested that in my experience young people are more perceptive than we give them credit for. While it is highly desirable to "personalize" our presentations and to inject a bit of humor we must be honest with these young people. We should let them realize that war making is a horrible experience and as "speakers" we should not attempt to sanitize it or choose only the good or funny experiences to share with them..

I am impressed with the sincerity of The Dominion Institute and the professionalism of its operating procedures, and laudable aims of The Memory Project. I suggest that official contact be made with that organization on a national level. If the National Executive of VANA agrees, it may wish to suggest our various chapters across Canada contact the local provincial officers concerned with the Memory Project if they can be identified.. VANA's participation could ensure that a balanced presentation of historical events such as Canada's participation in the Bobcat Series of nuclear tests in Nevada in 1957 is not lost sight of.

Sincerely, Woodrow (Woody)W. Coward (Lt.Col Retired) - Contact information: "THE MEMORY PROJECT" is an undertaking by The Dominion Institute, 183 Bathurst Street, Suite 401, Toronto Ont. M5T 2R7. Tel 416-368-9627 Fax 416-368 2111, long distance 1-866-701-1867, e-Mail staff@dominion.ca Web Site: www.thememoryproject.com

Newsletter Moves to Vancouver

VANA *National Update* has moved, and starting with this edition, comes to you from Vancouver, BC. The reasons for this change were sent out by e-mail on 10 November 2003, but since only 45 of VANA's 212 members (21%) are on e-mail, we repeat the reasons for this change below.

As our members inevitably become less active, the role of the VANA National Update in holding our organization together becomes even more important than in the past.

Your exec sees the Update as performing these functions

1. Covering Branch news
2. Encouraging Branch members to present their views on current VANA, Canadian and world issues
3. Providing a calendar of upcoming events.
4. Presenting articles & synopses on N-threat related news.
5. Inviting contributions from counterpart organizations such as Veterans For Peace
6. Providing a forum where your exec can explain its actions, plans and decisions.
7. Above all-Providing all of our members with a sense of community and involvement in our policy, our plans, our actions and our common purpose.

The former arrangement by which our *Update* was included in a peace magazine was cumbersome, and the interval between issues was too long - 3 months and sometimes longer. Also, the cost was high. VANA BC is currently issuing a BC Update to all BC members. The cost of copying, envelope and postage is about \$2./issue/member.

At our 10 November 2003 the VANA National exec meeting passed a motion to discontinue the inclusion of VANA's *Update* in a peace magazine..

There will be six issues a year and the paper will be produced, edited and issued from Vancouver to the list server, the website and in hard copy to members who are not online. We hope to get a correspondent" in each branch who will inform us of branch news by phone, fax, email or post, but we will encourage any branch members to send us material. There will be *Updates* in January, March, May, July, September and November. The deadline for items for inclusion the deadline is the first day of the month of publication.

Finally, VANA exec offers many thanks to the former *Update* Editor, Walter Josephy for his valuable contributions, and also to Richard Sanders for hosting our Update in his excellent peace-promoting news magazine.

Mark Frank's Letter re Pension Fund Abuse

Open Letter to Prime Minister Paul Martin
Government of Canada
Ottawa

December 12, 2003

Dear Prime Minister Martin:

As a retired member of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, Local 91 - O, I am appalled and outraged to discover that \$2.5 billion of Canada Pension Plan (CPP) funds are being invested in domestic and foreign corporations that traffic in arms and deadly weapons. These revelations are documented by the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade in a study in Press for Conversion, Oct. 2003.

Some highlights of the report follow:

- Through mandatory contributions to the CPP, working Canadians are being forced to invest \$2.5

billion in home and foreign military corporations.
- Sixteen million Canadians currently contribute to or benefit from the CPP.
- CPP Investment Board (CPPIB) manages the funds as a private investment corporation, buying shares in publicly-traded Canadian and foreign companies.
- It is ironic that the well-being of the elderly is linked, in part, to investments in military corporations that depend on war.
- The CPPIB invests in at least 170 corporations with military contracts.
- Their rationale is to maximize profits, but when Canadians retire they unknowingly receive monies from investments that profit from war.
- Legislation should be passed permitting democratic public screening of all CPP investments.
(continued on page 5)

Frank Letter (continued from page 4)

- Canadians should demand of the CPPIB and the Federal Government that investment of pension funds not be at the expense of world peace and human rights.

As a contributor, and now as a recipient of the CPP, I want to protest the investment of CPP funds in the

business of war. I urge the passage of legislation to re-direct such funds into socially beneficial enterprises.

Yours truly,
Mark Frank CEP Local 91-O (Retiree)

Three Minutes to Midnight: Nuclear Policy Research Institute Symposium on the Impending Threat of Nuclear War.

Twelve years after the end of the Cold War, the U.S. and Russia each maintain 2500 nuclear bombs on hair-trigger alert. This reality and other critical nuclear issues was examined by scientists, policy-makers, and military and medical experts from around the world at a Nuclear Policy Research Institute symposium in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 25-27, 2004. At this landmark symposium, nuclear abolitionists, weapons designers and supporters of nuclear weapons as a deterrent came together for the first time ever to discuss and debate the role of nuclear weapons in the 21st century. Scientists, policy-makers, military and medical experts from around the world met for three days of analysis, insight and strategy.

Topics

- * The risk of accidental nuclear exchange by United States and Russia,
- * The risk of terrorist intrusion into U.S. or Russian early warning systems
- * Proliferation to Pakistan, India, Israel, Iran, North Korea and other nations,
- * The Second Manhattan Project -- Stockpile Stewardship Program
- * Science, business and the military roles in the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Founded by Dr. Helen Caldicott, The Nuclear Policy Research Institute (NPRI) has been established to educate the American public through the mass media about the profound medical, environmental, political and moral consequences of perpetuating nuclear weapons, power and waste. Helen Caldicott, M.D., also Founding President (1978-83) of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR). PSR's international umbrella group (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) was the co-winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize, and Dr. Linus Pauling, himself a Nobel Laureate, individually nominated Dr. Caldicott for the Prize in the same year.

Presenters included:

Bruce G. Blair, March, 2000 President of the Center for Defense Information (CDI) after 13 years at the Brookings Institution as senior fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies Program. 1970-1974 U.S. Air Force, serving as a Minuteman ICBM launch control officer
Steven Schwartz, Publisher of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

Col. Valery E. Yarynich, Ret. Formerly an officer of Russia's Strategic Rocket Forces,
Dr. John Burroughs, Executive Director, Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy.

William Arkin, Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic Education.

Dr. Safranchuk Joined CDI July 2001 & opened a branch office, CDI Moscow,

Walter Pincus is a writer for the national news staff of The Washington Post.

Dr. Robinson, President of Sandia Corporation, a Lockheed Martin Company, and Director of Sandia National Laboratories.

Robert Nelson, Princeton University astrophysicist and MacArthur Science and Technology Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Bill Gertz is defense and national security reporter for The Washington Times,

Dr. Raymond Jeanloz, Professor of Geophysics at Berkeley and chair of the U. of California Weapons-Lab Oversight Committee. A member of JASON with extensive experience studying stockpile stewardship.

Mr. Mosher, Senior Policy Analyst at the RAND Corporation.

General Yevgeny Maslin graduated from the Budenny Military Signal and Engineering Academy, Leningrad, in 1959. Began his service in military nuclear divisions as a brigade engineer and, in 1997, retired as Chief of the 12th GUMO (Main Directorate of the Russian Ministry of Defense)

Intelligence Question

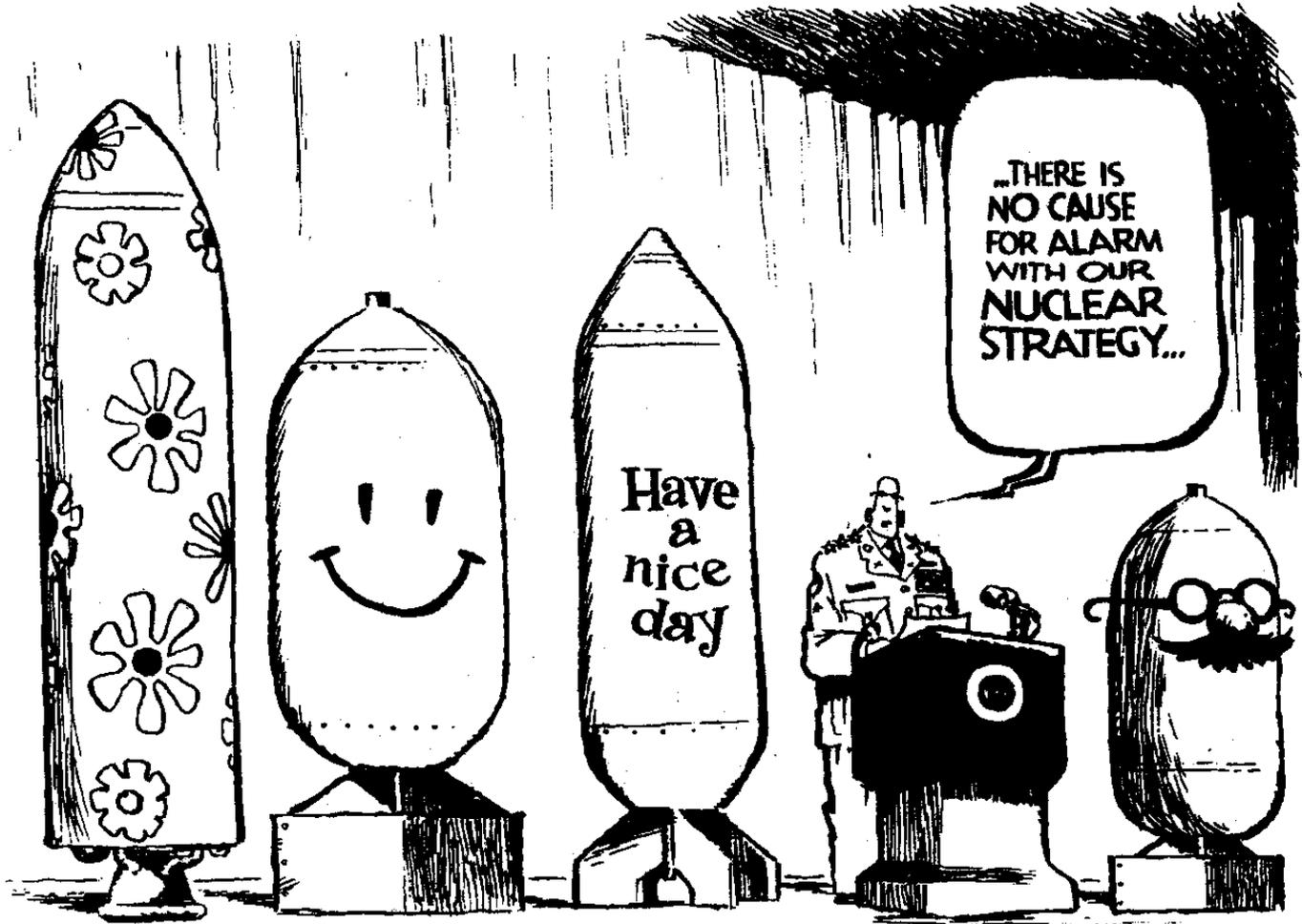
By Ed Shaffer

President Bush just announced the appointment of a committee to look into U.S. intelligence flaws. It would thus seem appropriate that the committee begin its investigation by probing the intelligence of that country's commander-in-chief. Should it surprise anyone if that committee came to the same conclusion as the weapons-of-mass-destruction inspectors did, namely that there is nothing there?

On the light side

Toad: "Pick me up & kiss me & I'll turn into a handsome prince..(pause)..well, why don't you kiss me?"

Princess: "I'd rather have a talking toad in my pocket."



VANA MEMBERSHIP

To renew your membership in or to join VANA, please fill out the form below and send, along with a cheque payable to VANA, to Shayle Duffield, RR#1 Z-46, Bowen Island, BC V0N 1G0. The dues are \$30, \$20 of which go to the national office and \$10 to the branch. (You can use the enclosed addressed envelope)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Code _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ email: _____