**Veterans For Peace**

**“Call for Help”**

***Saint Patrick’s Peace Parade***

**Alternative People’s Parade for**

**Peace, Equality, Jobs, Environmental Stewardship, Social and Economic Justice**

**When: Sunday, March 17 Where: South Boston**

Please join us for our **Third Annual Saint Patrick’s Peace Parade**, the ***Alternative People’s Parade for Peace, Equality, Jobs, Environmental Stewardship, Social and Economic Justice****.*

**Why are there two parades on Saint Patrick’s Day?**

For the past three years Veterans For Peace have been denied to walk in the historic Saint Patrick’s Parade in South Boston. This is the largest parade of its kind in the country with over 700,000 people viewing the parade. The parade has a dual purpose; the celebration of Saint Patrick and the Irish traditions and heritage and a celebration of Evacuation Day, the day the British were run out of Boston. Both days fall on March 17th, so the City of Boston thought it a good idea to have the Allied War Veterans Council (AWVC) organize the parade. The problem is that one side of the equation, St. Patrick, a man of peace, is second fiddle to a military parade. AWVC has the exclusive say in who gets to walk in this historical parade. The City of Boston, South Boston Community Groups, the Boston Police have absolutely no say in who walks the streets of South Boston in the Saint Patrick’s Day Parade.

**In 2011** Veterans For Peace’s application was denied, when asked why and were told, **“They did not want to have the word Peace associated with the word Veteran”**. Well they did not know the Smedleys very well. We pulled our own permit and with only three weeks to go before the parade pulled together 500 people and the **Saint Patrick’s Peace Parade,** the ***Alternative People’s Parade for Peace, Equality, Jobs, Environmental Stewardship, Economic and Social Justice*** was born.

Twenty years ago the LGBT community wanted to walk in the parade and were denied which resulted in a lawsuit that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court resulting in the Hurley Decision. The Smedleys immediately reached out to the LGBT community, inviting them to “walk in our parade”

**In 2012** we had close to 2,000 people, seven divisions (Veterans, Peace, LGBT, Labor, Political, Religious, Occupy Everywhere) two bands, bag pipers, drummers, a Duck Boat, two trollies etc. It was a grand success. We have an Environmental Stewardship Division this year. Our goal is to end this last vestige of institutionalized exclusion, prejudice, bigotry, and homophobia and make this parade inclusive and welcoming to all and bring the message of peace to South Boston on Saint Patrick’s Day.

Please join us in South Boston on March 17. Be sure to bring your Chapter’s or Organization’s banners, signs and costumes and join us in our fabulous **Third Annual Saint Patrick’s Peace Parade**.

On behalf of the Saint Patrick’s Peace Parade Organizing Committee.

Thank you,

Pat Scanlon (VN 69’)

Coordinator, VFP Chapter 9, Smedley Butler Brigade

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