

# SOLDIER'S *heart*

*Soldier's Heart is a veterans' return and healing project addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of veterans, their families and communities. Soldier's Heart promotes and guides community-based efforts to heal the effects of war based on strategies presented in "War and the Soul".*

PO Box 8564 Albany, NY 12208

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[www.soldiersheart.net](http://www.soldiersheart.net)

Ed Tick, executive director of Soldier's Heart and author of "War and the Soul", has recorded two interviews on Wisconsin Public Radio. They can be accessed on line at [www.wpr.org/merens](http://www.wpr.org/merens) and [www.wgtd.org](http://www.wgtd.org); both are in the archives.

## **"Laying Ghosts of War to Rest"**

<http://timesunion.com/ss.asp?s=551571&c=&b=>

Visit to read what Albany Times Union writer, Paul Grondahl, had to say about the January 2007 Soldier's Heart Retreat.

**EXPLORE Journal's 'Field Reports' with Ed Tick's latest article co-written with Capt. Frank B. Hill, "MASH Today: Medicine, War and Writing" can be ordered at (800) 654-2452 or visit [www.explorejournal.com](http://www.explorejournal.com).**

Visit <http://storyteller-and-listener.blog-city.com> after February 5, 2007 to read an article about the *Veterans' Return Retreat* by Soldier's Heart development coordinator, Maureen Daly.

## ***...after the Soldier's Heart Veterans' Return Retreat***

Friends,

Yesterday, as I was reflecting on the Soldier's Heart extraordinary weekend retreat, I had one of those everyday synchronistic experiences that we can almost miss if we are not alert. I was making tea. Just as I turned on the stove burner, I saw a baby spider recoil from the flames. I immediately shut the flame off. The spider was curled in a ball as if shriveled and dead from the heat. But it wasn't. It took about 10 minutes of careful prodding to revive it and lift it out of danger. I transferred it to a geranium in our front window, where it happily crawled into its new little green jungle.

What significance to this small encounter? We are all tiny insects in danger of being burned in the conflagration of war. But this past weekend veterans of seven different wars, wives and daughters, clergy and healers gathered together to create hands of love and compassion that can reach into the fire and rescue our warriors from the flames of war.

And why the Spider? In Native American spirituality, the Spider is First Grandmother who was dropped by the Creator into the void in order to spin the creation of our world. By reaching into the fire, we not only rescue our warriors, we rescue the world as well. Two thousand years ago Rabbi Hillel said, "If you save one person, it is as if you have saved the entire world." We are striving to bring about new creation for our vets, their loved ones, our country and the entire world. With the courage and love demonstrated this past weekend in healing the psychological wounds of war, there will be new spiders to spin new webs of creation and new warriors to protect it.

Our work has just begun. Together we create change...

Blessings,  
Ed

Thank you! We couldn't have done it without your help...

Ed, Kate, Maureen and Paula of Soldier's Heart give their heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported the January 2007 Soldier's Heart Veterans' Return Retreat. We received generous donations of food, scholarship funds and services from over forty businesses and individuals along with the dedication and hard work of our talented volunteers - Patty Stevens, Hervie Harris, Kim Kennedy, Beth Herrick, Kirsten Kroll and Dottie German. We'd like to thank:

*Albany Airport Comfort Inn*  
*Alchemy, Inc.*  
*Allerdice Party Rent-All*  
*American Legion Ladies Auxiliary, Post 1231*  
*Anthony's Pizza Palace*  
*Ario's Pizza and Barbeque Chicken*  
*Belly Jam*  
*The Bird Has Flown*  
*Ed Bloch*  
*Cardona's Market*  
*Sharon Chubbuck*  
*The City of Albany, Mayor Jennings Office*  
*James and Carol Daly*  
*The First Congregational Church of Tallmadge, Ohio*  
*DeCrescente Distributing Company*  
*Dunkin' Donuts*  
*Elite Catering*  
*The Ethel and W. George Kennedy Family Foundation*  
*Foothills Chiropractic*  
*Freihofer's Thrift Shop*  
*The Golub Foundation*  
*Hannaford Supermarkets*  
*Lloyd Hebert*  
*Honest Weight Food Coop*  
*Lou Ismay*  
*The John A. Sellon Charitable Trust*  
*Liquid Mind Music*  
*Bud and Margi Mahoney*  
*Moment Catcher Photography*  
*Office Max*  
*Pioneer Savings Bank*  
*Price Chopper*  
*Prinzo's Bakery*  
*Roma Foods Importing Company*  
*Stephen Ross Photography Services*  
*St Pius X Church*  
*The Times Union*  
*Troy City Hall, Village of Troy*  
*VA Hospital Volunteer Office*  
*Veterans for Peace, Tom Paine Chapter*  
*Voices in Wartime*  
*Windows on the Woods*

We especially thank Senator Joseph L. Bruno and his staff for their support of Soldier's Heart.

## ***Comments about the Veterans' Return Retreat...***

*"Thank you for all the work you have done for the cause...In the end run, it will save many young men and women from a great deal of pain and agony...Like Orestes manages to do in the Greek play, Agamemnon, it's time for the curse to come to an end... (Soldier's Heart) has gotten the ball rolling, and with any luck, we who have learned from the three of you, will continue the effort...semper fi", Tom (Vietnam veteran)*

*And from another attendee, "Thank you each and everyone for your truth, your wisdom, your courage, and to Ed and Kate: for your vision, your dedication and your love. I look forward to...the continued unfolding of Soldier's Heart, and to...being a part of this extraordinary mission." Lindsley (healer)*

*The following is part of the Sunday morning Interfaith service at the Soldier's Heart Veterans' Return Retreat*

### **Soldier's Heart – Hearts Wide Open: A Sunday Morning Service of Worship**

By John Schluep, Senior Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Tallmadge, Ohio and Army Veteran

This past weekend we saw ugliness and sorrow; scars and wounds yet to heal. This Sunday morning is a time of beholding that which is beautiful.

There are thin places in the universe where we come close to God without being destroyed by the experience. Tender and sacred moments where we truly are embraced by the Divine and are held by one another in deep intimacy. It is our heart's desire and like moths drawn to light we respond. The soft and gentle music awakens our senses as we are summoned to descend to the depth of All Being. In this place we see that we too are created in the image and likeness of the Great Creator – The Mother of All Creation. We share creation with all the plants, all the creatures great and small, all which swim the sea or take winged flight. Even the stones cry out to us to be one with them!

We find our oneness in our humanness and our place in creation. The sound of water being poured becomes a holy act as it splashes onto the table and the floor and on those nearby. Water cannot be confined - it has to be free. These glass stones, each a different size, texture and color call us to be aware of our uniqueness yet all are made of the same stuff. Water, cleansing water, washes us clean. The wetness reminds us of the Living Waters from the spring of water in side each of us. We come to that water thirsty, dry and parched; and in drinking from the Living Water we will never thirst again. The scented oil softens us as it is gently and lovingly offered with words that are spoken privately – "You are my anointed one." Our words are mere containers, vessels of The Word of Truth. Stories told are the containers of Truth, the words fall upon our ears yet are held in our hearts and descend to our soul and The Truth resonates – we are One. We have traveled the journey through the Valley of Shadows from Thursday to Sunday. Each of us has been embraced by The Light and now that Light that burns inside each one of us as we go into this dark world...the darkness shall not overcome.

*Contact us at [info@mentorthesoul.com](mailto:info@mentorthesoul.com).*

*For back issues of the Soldier's Heart newsletter visit [www.soldiersheart.net](http://www.soldiersheart.net)*

### **An Education in Truth**

By Paula Griffin

*We are pleased to announce that Paula Griffin has joined the staff of Soldier's Heart and Sanctuary. Paula will serve as administrative assistant to Soldier's Heart and assistant to Ed Tick.*

In mid December I attended a panel discussion on PTSD at Mohonasen High School. This event was part of a 10 week unit on Viet Nam in a year long course called Participation in Government.

The panel included two Viet Nam veterans, the widow of a veteran, Ed Tick and a 17 year old (who spoke about why she believes people her age need to be concerned about the current war). Ed introduced the topic

with a quick survey, asking those present how many would be willing enlist in the armed services if they were told by a recruiter that their country really needs them. About ¾ of the 100 students raised their hands. His follow up question went something like this. “If a recruiter were to tell you that your country really needs you, but that if you enlist, your life will never be the same again... how many of you would enlist?” Three hands went up.

The room quieted, as the panelists openly and eloquently shared their stories. Students were visibly engaged in listening and digesting the horrors of war. The images were gut wrenching, the pain palpable. The truth was being told.

I was moved by the integrity and courage of the panelists. People who have had so much taken from them already, having the heart and strength to give more...the gift of truth, even when it involved walking once more, through their own halls of hell.

I applaud Nick Coupas, the teacher of this course, for his bold step in providing this authentic and relevant experience, and the administration of Mohonasen High School for not standing in the way of the truth being told.

And I’m deeply thankful for the healing work of Ed Tick.

## On The Edge: A Series on Veterans and Healing

“No Worries” is a common cliché. This is not often the case for combat veterans with PTSD. Thankfully, a small company in San Diego, California, Smart Nutrition has created a stress formula called “No Worries”. The focus this month is on this unique formula and why it can be helpful to combat vets with PTSD. As the manufacturer states on the product label “No Worries was designed to reduce stress, worries, and anxiety.” This supplement contains four ingredients; Phenibut, Picamilon, Rhodiola rosea, and L-Theanine. Included with the bottle of product was the following information page from the manufacturer (excerpted for brevity): “Phenibut was developed in Russia in the 1960’s and is used for its anxiety reducing effect. In Russia phenibut is used to treat PTSD...and insomnia. Picamilon, in small doses, has a tranquilizing action, which prevents the negative physiological effects of emotional stress. Picamilon doesn’t have any sedative qualities, making it much more suitable for daily activities. Picamilon provides a tranquilized yet energized state of being. Rhodiola rosea, is a popular plant in traditional medical systems in Eastern Europe and Asia with a reputation for decreasing depression, enhancing work performance, eliminating fatigue, and preventing high altitude sickness. Rhodiola rosea has been categorized as an adaptogen by Russian researchers due to its observed ability to increase resistance to a variety of chemical, biological, and physical stressors. L-Theanine is an amino acid found in ordinary tea leaves from *Camellia sinensis* (authors note; a.k.a. “green tea”). L-Theanine has the reputation for promoting mental and physical relaxation and decreasing stress and anxiety without inducing drowsiness.” As stated in this excerpt from the manufacturer’s literature, this is why I find “No Worries” such an aid to manage my own symptoms of PTSD. You can find this supplement on their website; [www.SmartNutrition.info](http://www.SmartNutrition.info) and at their location; Smart Nutrition, 1765 Garnet Ave #66, San Diego, CA. 92109 1-858-270-7907 info, 1-800-479-2107 orders.

Remember, check with your physician before adding any supplement to your regimen, especially if you are taking medications for PTSD. Until next month,

On the Edge,  
M. Shawn Nelson

### ***And one final comment from a Vietnam Vet about the Veterans’ Return Retreat...***

*“I learned I was not alone in my war history. I learned that the truth no matter how painful can be held in a container of love and concern. I learned that a community is willing to support its vets. I learned that my brothers and sisters have a great deal to teach me. I learned that the ancient traditions truly hold a wisdom that I did not believe was there before the workshop. I learned that all living generations of war vets and their families are suffering from PTSD in some form. And I learned much more.”*