

Ground Zero

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The Other Side of Fear is Joy



Bangor Military Police prepare to arrest (L to R) George Rodkey, John Stahmer, Roger Thorson, and Zach Mandeville. The four held photos of the destruction at Hiroshima and Nagasaki as they blocked incoming traffic on the federal side of the blue line. *Photo by Leonard Eiger.*

By Brian Watson

It has been a month since I was released from the Kit-sap County Jail. I spent 37 hours in custody after being arrested on August 7, 2006 at the gates of Bangor, held on \$5,000 bail. The imposition of bail was ludicrous, and the three of us imprisoned that day—myself, Carol Ann Barrows, and Shirley Morrison—all refused to post bail. We decided to contest the bail, but our bail hearing wasn't till 1:30pm on August 8. So, we all got to experience a part of our culture that is invisible, and which, I think, more of us ought to experience.

The jail universe is not pleasant, nor comfortable. It was a time of awkwardness, great boredom, bad food, and longing for my wife and daughter. It was survivable, though, and I never really felt afraid. At some point during the booking process, I had stepped through a veil in my heart, to the other side of fear. What I found there surprised me beyond words, because the other side of fear is joy.

It was my first time to actually be *in jail*, and not just booked *at* the jail. This was quite a change from the past, when Ground Zero activists have been booked and released, but I

rolled with the situation. What I found within the walls of the jail was a mirror of Trident: it is made of metal, it's all men (at least in my cell block), you can't go anywhere, you only have so much to do, there's precious little sunlight or fresh air, you're away from the ones you love, you count the days of your sentence/deployment, it consumes resources that would be better spent elsewhere, and it is meant to be invisible. The main difference, I suppose, is that the food on a Trident is much better. What became clear is that both Trident and our so-called "justice" system are the end product of our culture's violence and lack of imagination.

During "intake," a guard asked me a question while he watched me change out of my normal clothes (I got to keep my underwear and socks) into my "prison pj's" (loose green pants and shirt, along with a pair of ridiculous pink flip-flops). As he observed me, he derisively asked "*So, was it worth it?*"

His question haunted me throughout my time in jail, where you get ample time to ponder such questions. Of course,

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Peace Fleet Greet US Navy

Coast Guard Respects Demonstrators' Rights

By Glen Milner

For the fifth year in a row, the Peace Fleet met US Navy warships as they entered Elliott Bay at Seattle's Seafair. Peace Fleet vessels carried signs stating, "Nuclear-Free Seafair," "War Costs," and other statements.

This was the first time in several years that Peace Fleet vessels were not boarded by the Coast Guard. Port of Seattle Police warned peace demonstrators this year that they must stay at least 100 yards from Navy warships and that vessels must be operated at slow speed within 500 yards of Navy warships.

In previous years, the Coast Guard and the Navy maintained that demonstrators had to stay 500 yards away from Navy vessels and demonstrators were told that they could be shot within 100 yards of a Navy warship in Elliott Bay.

In July 2006, a Coast Guard Hearing Officer determined that Coast Guard



Peace fleet much more scenic than the war fleet. Ela Esterberg, Mary Gleysteen, and Kim Esterberg sail in Elliot Bay. Photo by David Mitchell.

District Thirteen's request for a \$32,500 fine against a Peace Fleet skipper on August 5, 2004 was unwarranted, and instead, levied a warning against the peace demonstrator. A Hearing Officer's recent decision against Coast Guard District Thirteen, and a

statement to the Coast Guard from Attorney Aaron Caplan of the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington, may explain a departure from aggressive tactics against demonstrators at Seafair.

In addition, approximately 15 demonstrators were on the waterfront near Pier 66 with signs and a large banner stating "US Out of Iraq." A Port of Seattle Police officer at the pier turned out to be the same officer who, while incognito in 2000, attended the first public Peace Fleet meeting in Shoreline, Washington. The officer entered into a discussion with several demonstrators and defended his reasons for spying on organizers in 2000. He later agreed to have his photo taken with Karol Milner, who was also at the first Peace Fleet meeting.

2006 Peace Fleet sailors were: Bobbi Liden and Neal Liden of Port Townsend; Mack Johnson of Silverdale; Marilyn Bode and Mary Gleysteen of Kingston; Ela Esterberg, Kim Esterberg and David Mitchell of Bainbridge Island; and Mike McCormick, Aaron Milner and Glen Milner of Seattle.

The next scheduled Peace Fleet event is August 1, 2007 in Elliott Bay. Peace Fleet sailors also hope to meet the USS Ohio at Naval Magazine Indian Island when it arrives to load 154 Tomahawk cruise missiles at the ammunition wharf near Port Townsend.



Ela Esterberg holds a sign offering an alternative to a war economy. Photo by Kim Esterberg.

Glen Milner serves on the Ground Zero Stewardship Council.

\$10,000 Fine Against Peace Fleet Skipper Dropped

By Glen Milner

On July 17, 2006, Coast Guard Hearing Officer Lane McClelland ruled against a \$10,000 fine for Peace Fleet skipper Glen Milner for a demonstration at Seafair on August 5, 2004. The \$10,000 fine had been previously reduced by the Hearing Officer from a \$32,500 fine requested by Coast Guard District Thirteen in Seattle.

Hearing Officer McClelland instead issued a "warning" and ruled that it was "more likely than not" that I committed an infraction (within 500 yards of a Navy vessel) even though she admits she does not know if I violated the first, second, or third US Navy warship, or exactly when or where the infraction occurred in Elliott Bay. She also admitted that if I was stopped during this time by the Coast Guard, Navy vessels would have been coming toward me while I was under the direction of the Coast Guard.

Hearing Officer McClelland also decided that the testimony of Coast Guard Lieutenant Stoffer, placing the Ground Zero Center inflatable boat within 100 yards of the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard, was "unreliable." GPS records obtained through the Freedom of Information Act for the USS Bonhomme Richard show that Coast Guard testimony was false and that the events of the day as presented by Lieutenant Stoffer were not possible.

The warning is under appeal.

There were numerous procedural and legal problems with the case. I was never told the specifics of the charge. In the end, Hearing Officer McClelland closed my case and ruled against me before I was able to review or respond to a final six page response from Coast Guard District Thirteen. No actual evidence was ever presented by the Coast Guard showing the inflatable within 500 yards of U.S. Navy vessels. The filing date for an appeal with the Commandant of the Coast Guard is October 6, 2006.

Bush Pushes Nuclear Weapon Development

The Deceptive Nature of "Divine Strake"

By Sarah Olson

In the face of increased Congressional opposition to US nuclear weapons development, the Bush administration appears to be making an end run around governmental checks and balances. The bizarrely named Divine Strake project is a 700-ton explosive experiment, first scheduled to detonate at the Nevada Test Site in June of this year. Thanks to furious grassroots opposition to the proposal, Divine Strake has been twice delayed, and is currently projecting a detonation date of no sooner than early 2007.

But as the Department of Defense attempts to justify this explosion, many say the government is simply obfuscating and delaying: the blast, they say, is a simulated nuclear explosion designed to provide important test and calibration data for existing and possibly new nuclear weapons. It will happen at the Nevada Test Site after the elections, and it will kick up a 10,000-foot mushroom cloud potentially full of Cold War-era radioactive dust.

Further, as the UN Security Council deadline for Iran to halt its uranium enrichment program passes, and hostilities throughout the Middle East increase, many find the possible threat of US nuclear weapons development to be an unnecessary exacerbation of hostilities. The Bush administration, they say, is engaging in belligerent nuclear swashbuckling, and as a result, it is putting US citizens in danger.

What Is Divine Strake and Why Should We Care?

Divine Strake is a planned test explosion managed by the Department of Defense's combat support organization, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). According to DTRA spokesperson Irene Smith, "Divine Strake would consist of a surface detonation of 700 tons of ammonium nitrate-fuel oil, or ANFO, above a tunnel, constructed for multiple research efforts. The amount of explosive was selected to produce the energy needed to cause differing levels of ground shock - severe to light - along the length of the tunnel."

In addition to postponing the Divine Strake test after activists protested, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), which manages the Nevada Test Site, was also forced to withdraw its finding of no

significant impact regarding the environmental impact of the explosion at the Nevada Test Site. In a May 26th press release, NNSA announced: "This action is being taken to clarify and provide further information regarding background levels of radiation from global fallout in the vicinity of the Divine Strake experiment. Atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons by several countries in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in the dispersion of radioactive fallout throughout the northern hemisphere."

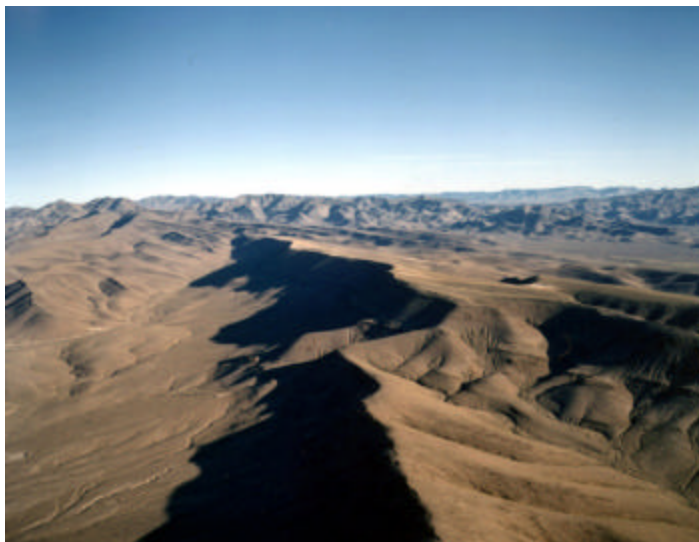
There are two largely interconnected types of objection to the Divine Strake explosion. The first is that Divine Strake appears to be a test to simulate a nuclear weapons explosion, and as such it puts the United States on a path towards a new generation of nuclear weapons. The second is that if Divine Strake were to be detonated at the Nevada Test Site, the blast is likely to unsettle radioactive dust from the Cold War-era nuclear tests.

"Slippery Slope"

Utah Congressman Jim Matheson wrote DTRA's director that he was greatly concerned that Divine Strake was an attempt to build low-yield nuclear devices. The DTRA budget, Matheson writes, "states that the demonstration 'will develop a planning tool that will improve the warfighter's confidence in selecting the smallest proper nuclear yield necessary to destroy underground facilities while minimizing collateral damage.' That sounds like preparation for a low-yield nuclear weapon to me."

While DTRA's Irene Smith declined to comment on whether Divine Strake would provide information for nuclear weapons, she did say that it "is part of the Hard Target Defeat program that develops and demonstrates new weapons, delivery concepts and planning capabilities to defeat hard and deeply buried targets. The improved computer model planning tools that are expected from the Divine Strake experiment could eventually help give combatant commanders greater operational flexibility and confidence in their ability to defeat hardened and deeply buried targets."

In general, DTRA has been reticent on whether they were testing for the effects of nuclear



Already Divine: The "Divine Strake" explosion would occur in the Western Shoshone Nation, just miles from Yucca Mountain, a sacred area for both the Shoshone and Paiute peoples.

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Trial of the “Weapons of Mass

By Bill Quigley

The Echo 9 launching facility for the intercontinental nuclear missile Minuteman III is about 100 miles northwest of Bismarck, North Dakota. Endless fields of sunflowers and mown hay dazzle those who travel there.

The fenced off site at first appears innocent. Until you get close you cannot see the sign that says deadly force is authorized against trespassers. A 40 ton nuclear missile lies coiled beneath the surface of a bland concrete bunker. This one Minuteman III missile has over 20 times the destructive power as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. After you realize what a launching facility looks like, you can see that the pastoral countryside is full of nuclear weapon silos. One nuclear weapon launching site lies just across the road from a big country farmhouse, another just down from a camp for teens. There are 150 other such nuclear launching facilities in North Dakota alone.

On the morning of June 20, 2006, three people dressed as clowns arrived at Echo 9. The clowns broke the lock off the fence and put up peace banners and posters. Then they poured some of their own blood and hammered on the nuclear launching facility.



“These weapons are insane” The three men, dressed as clowns, used bolt cutters to cut the fence and gain access to the silo. *Photo from www.jonahhouse.org.*

Fr. Carl Kabat, 72, along with Greg Boertje-Obed, 52, and Michael Walli, 57, were the people dressed as clowns. The three are called the Weapons of Mass Destruction Here Plowshares. They placed a copy of the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, international legal condemnations of nuclear weapons, bibles, rosaries, bread, wine, and a picture of Greg's daughter on the top of the missile silo.

Then they waited until the air force security forces came and arrested them. They were charged with felony damage to government property and were kept in North Dakota

jails until their trial in September.

In their trial they planned to argue to the jury that because the Minuteman III is a weapon of mass destruction it is illegal under international law. They hoped to share with the jury testimony from the Mayor of Hiroshima about the effects of nuclear weapons.

But the judge ruled the jury was not permitted to hear this evidence.

On the day of the trial, the judge asked people about their backgrounds and their opinions about nuclear weapons. Those who expressed any skepticism about the use of nuclear weapons were struck from serving on the jury by the government. Likewise, a Baptist missionary with a dove on her collar and all the Catholics were excluded.

Fr. Carl Kabat represented himself in the trial and gave his own opening statement. He told the jury that he had been a priest for 47 years. During his time in the Philippines and Brazil, he witnessed poverty and hunger on a scale unimaginable in the US. After that, he said, he could not allow 40,000 children a day to die from malnourishment while our country built and maintained thousands of nuclear weapons. Carl told the jury that he understood that because he was 72 he might die in jail in punishment for this protest.

“I don't know if I am doing the right thing or not, I am only doing the best I can. If anyone can think of anything better to do to stop this insanity - then, by all means, do it!” He said they dressed up as clowns as “fools for Christ,” and because “court jesters were often the only ones who could tell the truth to the king and not be killed for it.”

Fr. Carl pointed out nuclear weapons violated international laws. He asked the jury, “Why do you think it is illegal for North Korea or Iran to have nuclear weapons when we have thousands? I don't want anyone to have them. The weapon at Echo 9 can kill the entire population of New York City — just that one missile — and we have thousands of them! People may think we're nuts for dressing up as clowns and risking jail to get rid of these weapons, but it is these weapons that are actually insane.”

Greg Boertje-Obed spoke briefly to the jury about growing up in the Midwest and the south. As a teenager, he

“Greg showed the jury the picture of his daughter. ‘I brought this to Echo 9 as a symbol of why we again and again try to disarm nuclear weapons. We do this for the children.’”

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"Destruction Here" Plowshares

Plowshares Trial...continued from page 4

joined ROTC to be able to attend college and was made an officer. All the time he was a churchgoer. In graduate school he started awakening to the contrast between the religious values he found in church and the actions and priorities around him. Greg told the jurors of his journey into resistance as he realized that nuclear weapons were both illegal and immoral.

Michael was described to the jury as one of 14 children who grew up in the Midwest. He joined the Army and spent two tours in Vietnam. After a religious conversion, he began a life of voluntary poverty and assisting the homeless and sick.

The prosecutor called an FBI agent who told the jury all about the events of June 20. He described the defendants as polite at all times. The prosecution projected huge photos of the three dressed as clowns, pictures of the Echo 9 launching facility, and pictures of the items left behind on the wall of the courtroom.

The judge allowed Carl to read the statement they left at the missile silo. Carl put on his reading glasses and in a loud voice read to the courtroom:

"Please pardon the fracture of the good order. When we were children we thought as children and spoke as children. But now we are adults and there comes a time when we must speak out and say that the good order is not so good, and never really was. We know that throughout history there have been innumerable war crimes. Two of the most terrible war crimes occurred on August 6th and 9th, 1945. On August 6th, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, Japan, killing more than 100,000 people (including U.S. prisoners of war). Three days later the US dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki, Japan, killing more than 50,000 people.

"The US has never repented of these atrocities. On the contrary, the US has deepened and expanded its commitment to nuclear weapons... Each Minuteman III missile carries a bomb that is 27 times more powerful than those dropped on the Japanese people. The building of these weapons signifies that our hearts have assented to mass murder. Currently the US is seeking to research a new class of smaller nuclear weapons—demonstrating its desire to find new uses for weapons of mass destruction."

The prosecution then called a succession of young Air Force folks, who served as security for the Minuteman missiles in the silos in this area. Each one said the clowns were cooperative, nonviolent and peaceful. At the conclusion of the first soldier's testimony, Fr. Kabat asked him, "Do you know what was in the ground at Echo-9?" The flustered airman said, "No, sir, I do not." For the next half hour, every one of the young Air Force people called as witnesses by the government either said they did not know what was in the ground, or refused to answer Fr. Carl.

After the prosecution rested, the three defendants tried

in their own words to tell the jury about how international law condemned nuclear weapons, what kind of damage the weapons caused, and how the very existence of nuclear weapons was robbing the poor of the world of much needed resources.

Greg showed the jury the picture of his daughter. "I brought this to Echo 9 as a symbol of why we again and again try to disarm nuclear weapons. We do this for the children."

With the evidence finished, it was time for the judge to give instructions to the jury about how to decide the case. The defense asked for two instructions about justice — one



Fools for Christ and clowns for peace: (L to R) Fr. Carl Kabat, Greg Boertje-Obed, and Michael Walli prior to their action. *Photo from www.jonahhouse.org.*

from the preamble to the US Constitution another from Judge Learned Hand, and both were denied by the judge. Defendants asked that the jury be read the First Amendment — denied. International law? Denied. Nuremberg Principles? Denied. The US statute defining war crimes? Denied. The US statute defining genocide? Denied. The judge then went forward and instructed the jury to disregard anything about nuclear weapons, international law, and the good motives of the defendants.

Limited like this, the jury came back with felony guilty verdicts for all three defendants. One of the jurors told people afterwards that many on the jury learned a lot in the trial and were sympathetic to the defense, but "the judge's instructions left us no option but to find them guilty." As she walked away, the juror waved to supporters and yelled "Peace!"

The three remain in jail. They are in good spirits and at peace in the justice of their convictions. For their convictions, they face sentences of up to 10 years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000 each. They will remain in jail in North Dakota until their sentencing date of December 4, 2006.

Bill Quigley is a human rights lawyer and professor at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. He assisted the defendants in the trial. Bill can be reached at Quigley@loyno.edu.

Allowing Ourselves to be Disturbed

A Talk by Father Gerry W. Hughes, SJ

As the British government decides whether to fund the replacement of the Trident nuclear system, there is an ongoing groundswell of support among citizens, churches and political leaders to make the UK nuclear-free. The campaign will increase in visibility on October 1, when a year-long blockade of the Faslane Submarine Base will begin. Earlier this year, the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the UK sponsored a symposium entitled "Trident Replacement: What Does Theology Say?" The noted author Father Gerry W. Hughes, a Jesuit priest, gave a talk from which the following excerpts are taken.

A welcome to you all. I am very grateful for this invitation. It forces me to try and put into words what I think and feel after years of struggle with the question of nuclear deterrence. I still stutter and stammer, unable to find words to convey the horror of it all.

The horror is not primarily about Trident and its proposed renovations; primarily it is about what the submarines and bombs tell us about ourselves, and that is very disturbing. If we can allow ourselves to be disturbed, we can also be enlightened and encouraged; if we refuse to let ourselves be disturbed, we are a people without hope.

Let me begin with some general reflections. I remember where I was when I first heard news of the H-bomb on Hiroshima. I was on the beach at Prestatyn, North Wales. Someone said, "They've dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima and the war with Japan is over." I remember my immediate reaction – "Thank God the war is over – pity about the bomb." It took many years before the horror of it began to disturb me.

A second picture: In the eight years I spent as a chap-

lain at Glasgow University, I used to spend most Saturdays on the hills with groups of students. One summer's day we were sitting by the banks of Loch Lomond, when one student pointed out a valley leading from Loch Lomond to Faslane. He told us that the largest store of nuclear weapons in the UK were stored in the hillside, now occupied by NATO.

The third picture was the Holy Loch where the Polaris submarines were based. I climbed the hills overlooking the Holy Loch on a beautiful day in spring. The sky was cloudless, the sea like glass, not a submarine in sight. I imagined a Polaris periscope leaving its gentle ripple of water behind as it moved out to sea...

In all these pictures there is the contrast between the surface of things and the monstrous reality which lies beneath the appearances. Do these three images mirror something that is also in us? The destructive power of nuclear weapons does not lie in the submarine, or in its weapons: it lies in us. If that is true, then to rid ourselves of nuclear weapons does not solve the problem. The collapse of the Soviet Empire and the end of the Cold War did not bring about disarmament of the nuclear weaponry of US, NATO, and UK, built to defend us from the Soviet threat. It seems that we have to have an enemy if we are to feel secure.

"I do not believe we are going to make progress in banishing nuclear weapons until we acknowledge the split nature of our personality."

This is a meeting of the Christian Committee for Nuclear Disarmament. As Christians, could the root of our problem lie in the split nature of our personality? We have become so accustomed to it, that any attempt to question it begins to sound like heresy.

What I mean by split spirituality is the split between the faith we profess with our lips and the atheism we declare by our behavior. We can be very fussy about our liturgies, about the precise formulation of our beliefs, ever ready to declare each other unorthodox. We give great atten-



Scotland's Holy Loch: A Polaris nuclear submarine in an undated photo. The Polaris subs were phased out in the 1980s and replaced with Trident subs. *Photo from www.holyloch.com.*

***Allowing Ourselves...
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tion to these matters while, at the same time, taking remarkable and subtle care not to let God interfere in the ordinary everyday things of life, because, as we all know but do not dare utter, God is utterly impractical. Try putting the Sermon on the Mount into practice and see what happens! Can you imagine any great Christian political leader basing his manifesto on Jesus' teaching about turning the other cheek and not asking for your money back if someone robs you?

I spent three years in the 1950s in Germany. The question which struck me then and still remains is, "How was it that such an intelligent, educated and religious a nation could possibly fall for Nazism?" It is still a mystery, but any nation is liable to this national madness. I do not believe we are going to make progress in banishing nuclear weapons until we acknowledge the split nature of our spirituality.

We take great care to keep God out of the ordinary details of our lives. Most of us have been brought up in a culture which considers feelings to be a dangerous distraction from the serious things of life. "Ignore/overcome your feelings and do what you are told by those who know what is best for you." Our feelings and emotions are very wise. They register the significance of things for us before our logical minds have discovered why they are significant. One result of our split personality is that our logical minds become separated from our emotional life with disastrous consequences for both.

One consequence of this split is the support which our national policy of nuclear deterrence has had for the last sixty years. It is not enough to get rid of nuclear weapons. The root of the evil lies in our minds and hearts. Without a change there, we could get rid of nuclear weapons one day, then start creating them again on the next.

How can we heal this split?

The only effective place any of us can start is with ourselves. "All change begins within ourselves, or it does not begin at all." (Jung) "Act as though the Kingdom of God has already come." This is a quotation from the German peace activist, Dorothee Soelle in her book "The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance".

We need prayer and holiness, but both prayer and holiness are affected by the split. We need a prayer which is earthed in reality and a holiness which is of God, not of our own making.

If we can face up to the criminality of our nuclear deterrence policy and work perseveringly against it, we shall not only get rid of nuclear weapons, but discover a new way of living in the village of humanity, cooperating not competing, encouraging not terrorizing, being life-givers to all creation, not life-threateners to all life.

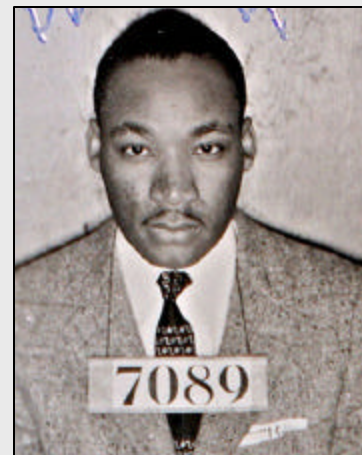
Father Gerry W. Hughes, SJ has written several books on Ignatian Spirituality and justice and peace, including "God of Surprises", "In Search of a Way," and his latest book, "God in All Things." He lives in Edinburgh, England.

Join Ground Zero on January 15 for MLK Day of Action

By Rev. Anne Hall

SAVE THE DATE! Ground Zero will honor the birthday of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 15, 2007, with a vigil and nonviolent direct action at the gates of Naval Base Kitsap, Bangor. Come join us! Our training will begin at 8:30 a.m. at the Kitsap Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (KUUF), 4418 Perry Ave., Bremerton, 98310. In the early afternoon we will gather at Ground Zero and walk to the base gate for a vigil and action. Afterward we will return to KUUF for debriefing and to await the release of arrestees. Check the next Ground Zero Newsletter for driving directions and details.

We are hoping that as many as 100 people will risk arrest at this action, and we also hope for lots of support people, vigilers and peace keepers. If you are considering risking arrest and would like help with discernment, please contact one of the following facilitators of affinity groups: Glen Milner, Seattle, (206) 365-7865; David Hall, Seattle, (for members of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility), (206) 545-3562; Mary Gleysteen, North Kitsap, (360) 297-3894; Alice Zillah, Olympia, (360) 357-7705.



A 1956 mug shot of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. taken by Alabama police after he was arrested during the Montgomery bus boycotts. Rev. King was 27 years old at the time.

Annual War Toys Vigil on November 24

Join Ground Zero friends on Friday, November 24, for the annual War Toys Vigil, to encourage shoppers to buy nonviolent toys and video games for children. The group will meet on the sidewalk at the corner of Randall Way and Kitsap Mall Boulevard, in Silverdale (by Target). Contact Mary Gleysteen at (360) 297-2890 or Betsy Collins at (360) 297-2890 for more information.



New House Update

By Dave Hall

Our architect Ted Bower and structural engineer Andy Herrick are close to completing the drawings required for the building permit process. Once we get the permits from the Kitsap County building department we can begin building.

Meanwhile the fire investigators from the federal Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) Division determined that our house fire was **not** caused by arson, but was indeed most likely an electrical fire.

We will shortly apply for a demolition permit and contract a demolition crew to remove the old house.

Building for the new house is now planned for spring or early summer depending on the weather patterns at the time.

We continue to recruit volunteers to help build the house, support the building crew, help with purchasing materials, and obtaining donated materials and funds. If you want to help, email Dave Hall at dchall@wolfenet.com or house@gzcenter.org.

Dave Hall is the chair of the Ground Zero building committee and a member of the Stewardship Council.

Time for Nonviolence

A Plea for Peace From Bethlehem

By Zoughbi Zoughbi

There are those who are trying to set fire to the world.

We are in danger.

There is time only to work slowly.

There is no time not to love.

— Deena Metzger

Yes, we are in danger. Occupation is here, war is in Lebanon, over there and everywhere. The world is full of conflicts, wars and violence. Governments around the world have big budgets for war (so-called “security”), and very few crumbs for peace building, for education, and for investment in human security.

I have lots of pain to see innocent people killed here or there.
I have lots of pain to see hundreds of thousands of refugees stateless, homeless and shelter-less.
I have lots of pain to see AIDS and other sicknesses killing more people.
I have lots of pain to see famine sweeping Africa and many plagues around the globe.
I have lots of pain to see the tears of the children around the globe... those who have not enjoyed their basic needs of food, good drinking water, and shelter.
I have lots of pain to see the indifference of the Free world leaders to such issues.
I have lots of pain when I see the Israeli leaders not learning from history... Building Apartheid walls, imprisoning people, killing and maiming, waging a full scale war on the civilians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank will not give Israel any security or grant their leaders peace.

Indeed, Khalil Gibran says, “Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.” Therefore breaking the shell of pain, as Founder and Director of Wi’am Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center, I feel we must celebrate 100 years of Gandhi’s anniversary, which should be our vision, strategy and our only way of life.

It is the time to save many lives and to say the Occupation is evil, as well as all kinds of violence. All kinds... including state terrorism, insurgent terrorism, state-sponsored terrorism and environmental terrorism. We cannot delay it anymore. Let us save the lives of all of our kids.

Gandhi’s words remain the tolling of the consciousness bells that remind us whenever we tend to forget:

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world..”

Zoughbi Zoughbi is the director of the Wi’am Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center based in Bethlehem. The Center is committed to “addressing injustices rather than avenging them; dignifying persons on both sides of the conflict; promoting human rights and advocating for peace among all people.” Their web site is www.planet.edu/~alaslal/.

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my answer to him at the time was “Yes. It’s always worth it.” But I honestly didn’t *feel* that way during much of my time in jail. I wanted nothing more than to be with my daughter, to smell her little girl sweetness, or to hold my wife’s body in my arms.

Ironically, I think it was only after being released, and



Rob Goldstein holds a sign aloft as he is placed under arrest. Rob, Liz Rivera Goldstein, Shirley Morrison, Carol Ann Barrows, Brian Watson, and Brenda McMillan were arrested on the county side of the blue line. *Photo by Leonard Eiger.*

as I embraced my wife and daughter—who came skipping up to me shouting “Dada! Dada! Dada!” when I emerged from the jail—that I started to feel the truth that, indeed, my small sacrifice *was* worth it. As I wrapped my arms around my family there in the parking lot outside of the jail, I inhaled the scent of my daughter’s hair, and felt the strong softness of my wife’s body, and I realized that these precious gifts—the gifts of life all around us—

are what Trident holds a sword over every moment of every day that we allow it to exist.

My daughter’s life is worth it. My wife’s life is worth it. My life is worth it. All of the great and small miracles of life all around us are worth it. And, maybe more than anything, honoring my conscience and my sense of what is good and right and decent is worth it.

What is most precious to you? Who are the ones you love? Who loves you? What do you believe that calls to your conscience?

These are the questions we really need to ponder as we consider whether anything we do is “worth it.” The fact that I had to spend some time in an uncomfortable and awkward place for a couple days pales in comparison to the enormous, tangible hope that our action on August 7 helped move heaven and earth just a tiny bit further toward the day when the last nuclear weapon on the planet is dismantled forever.

I believe that the time is nigh for all of us who care about the future to take the above questions into our hearts as we consider what involvement and what gifts we can bring to the movement to abolish nuclear weapons. I believe that there are many, many people—and you may be one of them—who are ready (even if you don’t know it yet) to risk arrest by symbolically closing the Bangor base. There are many, many more who are ready to take one more step just outside their comfort zone that does not involve risking arrest, by giving of them-

selves in their own, beautiful way, to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

I want to share a vision of mine with you: imagine 100 conscientious people sitting in the road that leads to Bangor, each of whom is supported by a constellation of equally committed people not risking arrest, who calmly refuse orders to leave, and who are arrested and moved into a veritable traffic jam of police vehicles. Now imagine 1,000 people, each again supported by a network of people. Now imagine 10,000 people. With each of these leaps in magnitude, understand that each person arrested is only the tip of an iceberg, and that the people who love the person being arrested are awakening, and changing, and causing change in others, like ripples in a pool.

Now imagine one person. It is an imperfectly human person with infinite gifts. It is a person who is afraid, but who is ready to step through the veil of fear. It is a person who cares deeply about the future. It is a person who is loved and who loves others.

That person might be you. That person is the one that is needed, in the deepest way, to speak out for life and love. That person might choose to risk arrest, or might not. What’s really important is that that person has made a commitment to take that long walk of nonviolence, to build the road of peace, one step at a time.

So, do what you can. Do what you *can’t*. You will know, in your heart of hearts, what actions are right for you. You will know, when you think about all that is your life, what is worth it.

Brian Watson is a sculptor who lives in Bremerton. You can see his artwork at his website www.bwatsonstudios.com.

Continuance Hearing October 11

By Brian Watson

On Sept. 13, Ground Zero activists Brian Watson, Carol Ann Barrows, and Shirley Morrison had their first court appearance for charges stemming from the May 15 and August 7 Ground Zero actions. At the hearing, a continuance was granted so that they and their attorney, Michael Stowell, would have more time to prepare their defense. There were many supporters in the courtroom to witness the proceedings.

The next court appearance will be Wednesday, October 11, 2006 at 10:30am, upstairs in District Court at the Kitsap County Courthouse in Port Orchard, for a pre-trial hearing.

Donations to the Legal Defense Fund are more than welcome. Even though the attorney has taken on this case pro bono, there are still considerable legal costs associated with a trial. Please make your check out to Ground Zero and write “Legal Defense Fund” on the memo line. Also, Brian Watson is collecting gently used paperback books to donate to prisoners inside the Kitsap County Jail. If you have paperbacks in good condition, please call Brian at 360-479-6399 to arrange donation of your books.

weapons, but they officially declined to rule it out. Hans Kristensen, at the Federation of American Scientists, reported that on April 3rd, DTRA acknowledged in written correspondence that Divine Strake was “a low-yield nuclear weapons calibration simulation against an underground target.”

This confirmation alarmed peace and environmental activists. “This really does represent a slippery slope to creating a new generation of nuclear weapons,” says Vanessa Pierce, director of the environmental advocacy group HEAL Utah. She says the Bush administration has consistently pushed for a nuclear weapons program, and Congress has consistently said no.

And this is done in the face of increased global tension regarding nuclear weapons development programs. “The hypocrisy is incredible. You cannot preach temperance from a barstool. And that's precisely what the Bush administration is doing,” says Pierce. “Divine Strake sends a message to other nations. It escalates the value of nuclear weapons in the eyes of those who seek to attack this country.”

“Children of the Bomb”

J. Truman is the director of Downwinders, an organization advocating for the rights of those downwind from Cold War-era atomic testing at the Nevada Test Site. He was born in 1951, the year atomic testing started. “It was like a big carnival,” Truman says. “We were encouraged to go watch history being made. The government said there was no danger.”

First the sheep in the area started dying. Then people began to die too. A 1997 National Cancer Institute Study – the most comprehensive study of the effects of atomic testing at the Nevada Test Site to date — estimated fallout from nuclear weapons testing generated anywhere from 10,000 to 75,000 cases of thyroid cancer. Political activism in the 1980s revealed documents admitting the government knew the danger to downwind populations, even at the time of the tests.

According to Truman, this disaster is easily repeatable. “Divine Strake is just a steady step toward resuming testing. Another round of nuclear weapons development could make us all downwinders.”

A lawsuit filed on behalf of two Western Shoshone tribes and downwinders from Nevada and Utah is attempting to stop Divine Strake based on these same health concerns. Attorney Robert Hager accused the Department of Defense and Bechtel of Nevada of “junk science” and intentionally failing to conduct proper soil samples.

Toxic exposure expert Richard Miller and Physicians for Social Responsibility both filed papers in support of the lawsuit. Miller wrote that “insufficient research [has been done] regarding the health effects of many of the potential radio isotopes possibly buried in the soil that may be entrained in the dust cloud as a result of the Divine Strake event.”

Dr. Thomas Fasy is with the executive committee of the New York chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility. Fasy argues: “to a reasonable degree of medical and scientific certainty ... the ‘Divine Strake’ explosion would disperse large amounts of radioactive particles into the atmosphere ... millions of citizens living downwind ... are at risk of inhaling particles.”

Fasy also believes “it is virtually certain that this inhalation of radioactive particles would result in an increased frequency of a variety of cancers in the exposed populations. Moreover, the increased risk of developing cancers would be borne disproportionately by the children living downwind.”

Opposition to nuclear testing and nuclear weapons development isn't a radical issue for people in the southwest, according to J. Truman. Nearly everyone knows someone who has cancer. Nearly everyone in his generation has been affected by the tests. “Those of us who were children of the bomb are in charge now. We said, ‘You're not going to do this to our children. To our grandchildren. No more downwinders. Enough.’”

HEAL Utah's Vanessa Pierce agrees this is an issue shared by many in the west. “When you lose a part of yourself because the federal government put you in harm's way, that's not a transgression you can ever forgive or forget. This goes to the very core of human survival.”

“Divine Strake Is an Important Wake-Up Call”

Jacqueline Cabasso is the executive director of the Western States Legal Foundation. She says it's important to understand that Divine Strake is not a nuclear weapons test; it's a test to evaluate the effect of existing nuclear weapons. This distinction should not mollify concern about nuclear weapons use. To the contrary.

“Operationally, nuclear weapons are more fully integrated into the US defense plan than ever before,” Cabasso says. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) was previously in charge of all US nuclear weapons; its arsenal has been streamlined to include both nuclear and conventional weapons under the same roof.

Worse still, she says, the US public doesn't fully understand the reality of US nuclear position. “There is no public discussion or debate about US nuclear weapons. Their existence, their purpose, or their future. Yet they are integrally related to our wars. In every aspect, the nuclear weapons program is moving forward. Billions of dollars have been spent.

“This Divine Strake test is a tiny point of this program that has become visible,” Cabasso says. “But there are many interconnected programs also happening just below the radar of public scrutiny.” For example, on Wednesday, even as we discussed Divine Strake, the Nevada Test Site was conducting a subcritical nuclear test.

Divine Strake has a certain symbolic importance. The more the US appears to be considering nuclear weapons use - appears to be moving forward with nuclear weapons development and testing - the more other countries will consider themselves in danger. But, Cabasso says, it's important to consider Divine Strake within the context of the existing nuclear arsenal and the ongoing conventional weapons testing. “This is just one of many, many ongoing tests. Divine Strake should be seen as a wake-up call.”

Sarah Olson is an independent journalist and radio producer. She can be reached at solson75@yahoo.com. This article originally appeared on Truthout.com.

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Would you like to receive this newsletter online?

Let Us Know What You Think!

By Alice Zillah

The Ground Zero Stewardship Council is discussing the possibility of publishing this newsletter in email form, either to replace the paper version or in addition to it. What do you think? Would you prefer to receive this newsletter in an email? Would you be more likely to read it, or less? We want to hear your thoughts. Please email info@gzcenter.org with your feedback.

Whether or not we begin publishing an email newsletter, we would like to collect email addresses of everyone interested in Ground Zero so that we can get the word out about special events, poll members about new proposals, and forward items of special interest (for instance, upcoming trial dates). However, we promise to send you emails only occasionally — we know that most of us get too much email already. Please send your email address to info@gzcenter.org so we can update our database.

Alice Zillah edits the Ground Zero newsletter.

Mark Your Calendars: Annual Meeting on October 28

All are invited to the Ground Zero Annual Meeting, at the Bainbridge Island Nipponzan Myohoji Temple. See enclosed flyer for full details!



GROUND ZERO

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Address Service Requested

“I do not appreciate what the US government is doing in regards to detonating bombs on the Western Shoshone land. Let's not let this continue. We must think of younger generations. We only have one earth that we live on, one water we drink and one air we breathe.”

— Corbin Harney
Western Shoshone Spiritual Elder
Founder, Shundahai Network

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