

# Ground Zero

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## Pacific Life Community Nurtures Faith and Resistance

By Leonard Eiger



A small group of peacemakers sat together in the chapel at a retreat center on a small island in South Puget Sound on the first weekend of March. We were paying tribute to dear friend and fellow nuclear resister Sr. Anne Montgomery, who died last August. At the center of the room was a small table with candles, photos of Anne, a bowl with sunflower seeds, and a container of soil. As people were so moved they went up to the table, one by one, and shared thoughts and memories of Anne, and then picked up a few sunflower seeds and pressed them into the fertile soil.

Sunflowers are a beauty to behold in their late-summer splendor, and they are a glorious, global symbol of nuclear disarmament. As I sprinkled a few sunflower seeds into the soil that morning I was struck by the powerful metaphor they represented in the context of that gathering and of our work in the world.

We had come together for the Pacific Life Community's annual Faith and Resistance Retreat. People from around the Western United States gathered for a weekend of fellowship, sharing, and resistance to the taproot of violence – nuclear weapons.

I was honored to have the opportunity to facilitate the

gathering – a task that more than one person referred to as “herding cats.” Partway through the weekend I understood what they were referring to, and added that it was more like herding feral cats. It was, at any rate, a rich and rewarding experience.

It was humbling to be in the midst of a community of people dedicated to a life of resistance to nuclear weapons and war-making, all the while tending to the needs of those in need; truly the balance of mercy and justice. Mira Leslie summed it up beautifully: “Egoless devotion to life, community, and love – a rich alternative – a group of revolutionaries – live and strong – working together.”

Being (nonviolent) revolutionaries, it was not enough for PLC members to sit around talking all weekend and then go home. In the true spirit of faith and resistance the group trekked up to Ground Zero early Monday morning. We then walked down to the main gate of the Trident nuclear ballistic missile submarine base to bear witness to the massive concentration of nuclear weapons – the taproot of violence – that lies hidden behind those gates.

While the group vigiled peacefully along the roadside,

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**PLC Retreat... continued on page 2**

those who had decided to risk arrest began a direct action in symbolic closure of the base and its conversion to peaceful uses (and jobs). Six of us chose to blockade on the county side. Our banner quoted Martin Luther King Jr.: "When scientific power outruns spiritual power, we end up with guided missiles and misguided men."

Shortly after our arrest by State Patrol officers a second group entered the roadway with banners and signs. Each of the 14 resisters carried a letter addressed to the base commander, which they attempted to deliver after stepping across the blue line onto the base. Naval security officers arrested them and refused to accept their letters (a copy has been mailed to the base commander).

Standing in the median, I engaged in conversation with a young Patrol officer. The officer was surprised that the Navy is planning to build 12 new ballistic missile submarines, intended for only one purpose – launching ballistic missiles armed with massive thermonuclear warheads. I shook hands with the officer after we were issued our citations, and as I walked back to the roadside I thought that perhaps in that brief conversation I had planted a small seed – hopefully a seed of peace.

Each of us has this potential in our interactions with others – to plant tiny seeds of peace. We may not always have the opportunity to nurture those seeds, yet that is the beauty of

it; knowing that each of us also has the capability of nurturing those seeds within ourselves. Who knows where those seeds will be carried, nurtured and spread even further?

After Monday morning's fitting conclusion the Pacific Life Community 2013 Faith and Resistance Retreat ended, and everyone returned to their day-to-day work of balancing mercy and justice in a world dreadfully out of balance.

As I made my way home I found myself uttering a prayer of thanksgiving for such a dedicated and courageous community of peacemakers. I also rededicated myself to continue planting seeds of peace wherever I find soil.



**Lynne Greenwald** joins hands with other PLC attendees during the action. *Photo by Leonard Eiger.*

**Leonard Eiger** co-chairs the Communication Committee for the Stewardship Council. His blog, *the Nuclear Abolitionist*, can be read at <http://nuclearabolitionist.blogspot.com>.

## Two poems in honor of Mother's Day

### My Body is Mother Earth

By Bernie Meyer

My body is Mother Earth  
My body is a beautiful creature  
Emerging out of the nourishing energies of time  
Flourishing with the living foods and waters  
Breathing air, sunning my body.  
Joy of light, life, truth.  
Nature's prodigy      Dancing, Dancing

My body is Mother Earth  
Scourged by time and use  
Abused  
Breaking down by age, wear and tear  
Attacked by the foibles of human inventiveness  
Science-technology, unreasoned merciless applications  
Radiation, Pollution, scorched earth policies  
Verging on Death.      Dancing, Dancing

My body is Mother Earth  
Millennia's moment in sunshine and rain  
A brief splurge of emerging mixture  
Used and abused  
Take me, love me, and heal me  
And send me on.      Dancing, Dancing

My body is Mother Earth.

### Ground Zero Inspiration

By Anonymous

Sitting silently on the sidelines I want to shout,  
"Save us from ourselves.  
Applause for the awesome, assertive, courageous activists!"  
Accomplished Ground Zero: 35 years of peaceful protests grounded in Love.  
"No Nuclear missiles, No way, Never, Not in my name."

Can I be a conduit for peace too? Could I be as brave and committed?  
Concerned but cautious, I've come to hear the clock's command.  
Creative Caretakers of the earth, Come, act now.  
Band together. Be Bold, Beautiful, Blessed. Beatitudes.

**Bernie Meyer and Anonymous** responded to the call for poems for the Mother's Day action on Saturday, May 11. The theme of the action is "Speak Truth to Power" and will include poetry and other art in response to nuclear weapons. See the enclosed flyer and the Ground Zero website for more details.

# Living With Nukes

***“In this moment—this one now—I am safe.”***

By Connie Mears

What is it like to live within yards of what may be the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons in the world? It's a thought that sneaks into the room while I'm making a final check on the doors. When all the day's activity stops, and you're left with your own thoughts. There it sits at the edge of the bed when I return, that dark shadow. Fear.

I've been backpacking solo and lived on an uninhabited island for two years, so I recognize its silhouette. It sits there silent with furrowed brow, arm outstretched, pointing to some unknown future. And as fears go, nuclear annihilation is a pretty good lure.

I didn't make the choice to live at Ground Zero lightly. Living within the base's red circle – the area where if a blast occurred, I'd be instantly vaporized – puts me, literally, at ground zero. Not exactly a bedtime story, is it?

What I like about this situation is that it gives me an opportunity to practice peace, right here in my own mind.

*“Breathing in, I calm body and mind. Breathing out, I smile. Dwelling in the present moment I know this is the only moment.”* – Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace*

In this only moment I can “be peace,” floating on the surface of a vast invisible sea of lovingkindness. I can bob on this ocean of love, letting it rock me gently to sleep, or I can pretend I have an obligation to “entertain” fear just because it showed up tonight. I know better. An accident, an earthquake, a misread cue, a retaliation are all within the realm of possibility and the subsequent aftermath is what some might call the “unthinkable.” Maybe tonight while I sleep, maybe tomorrow when I'm mowing the lawn. Maybe later as I am proofreading this essay. But in this moment – this one now – I am safe. I am fine. All is well.

The Lakota have a saying, “Today is a good day to die.” Once you make peace with death, all other fears shrink into miniature versions of themselves. You can swat them away like small pests. Once you clear the mind-clutter devoted to “what's wrong, what's bad, what might happen,” it can be used for more creative (and joyful) endeavors.

## **An urgent, undeniable cry**

This morning gunfire from the nearby shooting range started up, puncturing the peaceful silence. I had thought perhaps the constant blasts could drive a person to madness, but as it turns out, it is the insistent cry of my cat, Hope, that unnerves me. She is old and at times gets disoriented. Although I enjoy

silence, and would probably prefer not to hear the gunfire, the fact is, I can't do anything about it. It's none of my business. And as such, my mind tends to tune it out. It becomes background, much like the fact of nuclear weapons close by. The cat's cry, however, much like a baby's, is undeniable. It triggers a call to action.



**Being present allows us to accept the gift of each moment.** *Photo by Leonard Eiger.*

The cat's cry is urgent and I recognize it as my responsibility to address. Herein lies our challenge, because, quite frankly, we're all living with nukes. They could as easily hit Seattle as they could Bangor. They are in everyone's psychological backyard. But we all, for the most part, don't focus on it. We let it drift into the background because we're busy attending to the urgent, undeniable cries of the present moment: Our cats, our bills, our small hurts. Somehow we've got to convey the issue of nuclear weapons as urgent, as needing immediate action. Like the cry of a baby or a vase about to fall. People have been conditioned, after years of living with nukes, to simply accept that a nuclear holocaust is possible, even likely, at some undeterminable point in

the future. It becomes simply an abstract idea. Nothing we can do anything about. We are told that “other people” – people in authority – are responsible for this horrendous issue.

We've got to find a way to make the issue more personal, more urgent, and more like the undeniable cry of a cat.

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**Connie Mears** serves as *Caretaker of the Ground Zero House*, and is a member of the *Stewardship Committee*.

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## **Seattle Protest Against Drones**

By Dorli Rainey

Ground Zero has endorsed a demonstration to bring attention to drones. The rally will take place at Westlake Park in Seattle on April 17 at 4:00pm. It will be followed by a march to Boeing's downtown offices. Boeing's subsidiary Insitu manufactures drones in at a factory in Bingen, WA.

Speakers will include Peter Lumsdaine, an expert on drones. The demonstration has also been endorsed by Veterans for Peace (Chapters 92 and 143), Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, Washington ANSWER, Women in Black, and the Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation.



# MLK Action Closes Main Gate for 30 Minutes

## Fourteen activists participate in symbolic die-in

By Leonard Eiger

January 19 was a day of centering on the heart of Martin Luther King Jr. His legacy of nonviolence, and his strong stand against war and nuclear weapons were woven throughout the day. We began our day with a video on Dr. King's 1967 sermon on "Why I am opposed to the Vietnam War." You could have heard a pin drop as we listened to Dr. King's prophetic words that were overlaid with powerful and often graphic images of that time period.

This followed with a discussion on this sermon that resonates so strongly today as we struggle with the same issue Dr. King addressed then. Gilberto Perez followed with his story growing up Afro-Cuban-American in Harlem as it relates to racism, hatred and war (see opposite page).

From here I'm going to cut to the chase, or in this case the ACTION. In the afternoon, after reading the pledge of nonviolence, the roughly 50 resisters walked from Ground Zero to the Bangor main gate to the usual "designated protest zone." Things were a bit more relaxed there. The only "official" presence was the large Navy security contingent waiting for us behind the blue line. The only civilian law enforcement present was one sheriff's deputy observing from up on the Clear Creek overcrossing.

As the group arrived at the main gate, four resisters walked out onto the overcrossing and unfurled their banner reading "Abolish Nuclear Weapons" and displayed it prominently for drivers to see as they approached the base. The remainder lined up along the roadway below with signs and banners. Monks from the Bainbridge Island Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Temple and others drummed and chanted.

A short while after our arrival 11 resisters, carrying a large banner, moved out onto the roadway and stretched the banner across, blocking incoming traffic. The banner quoted Dr. King: "When scientific power outruns spiritual power, we end up with guided missiles and misguided men." Since the State Patrol was not present (and we had notified them of our intentions that day) the blockade continued for close to a half hour (much like last MLK day 2012). After a while the resisters brought the banner reading "Abolish Nuclear Weapons" out

onto the roadway, also blocking part of the outgoing lanes.

At long last a lone State Patrol officer arrived, got out of his car, and addressed the assembled throng, respectfully requesting that they remove themselves from the roadway. In response, in a well-choreographed movement, they all fell to the ground in a die-in, symbolizing the "horrific effect of a nuclear weapon," to quote participant Thomas Hodges.

Eight of the die-in participants crossed onto the base before dropping to the ground. Naval security personnel, who had been observing during the vigil and action, immediately moved in to arrest them. They were taken to a building on the base where they were questioned, processed and released after being issued citations for trespassing. All will receive summons to appear in federal court.

Those cited for trespassing were Mary Gleystein, Lynne Greenwald, Rodney Herold, Thomas Hodges, Constance Mears, Taylor Niemy, Michael Siptroth, and Carlo Voli.

The other three protesters – Gabriel LaValle, Tom Shea, and Alice Zillah – remained outside of the base boundary. All three left the roadway and were not cited. In an amusing anecdote, Alice remained on the ground while the others left the roadway. The State Patrol officer walked over to her and asked her to leave. Alice (while still lying on the ground) asked if he was going to arrest her. He said "No." She then asked if he was going to cite her. Again, "No." She told him that she had expected to be cited. The officer responded that they would take care of it if she would first move off the roadway. Alice complied, and the officer picked the banners off the roadway and returned them to the protest zone. Shortly thereafter, without citing any of the three, he got in his car and left the scene.

A while later, after being processed and cited, the Federal arrestees returned to Ground Zero and we shared our reflections on a fine day of resistance and honoring Dr. King's wonderful legacy.



**Military police move to arrest** those "dying" on the federal side of the blue line (or laying across it) while on the county side, a single State Patrol officer was unwilling to issue any citations. *Photo by Leonard Eiger.*

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**Leonard Eiger** serves on the Ground Zero Stewardship Council and co-chairs the Communications Committee.

# Welcome to My Fellow Maladjusted Socially Engaged Peacemakers!

Talk Given by Br. Gilberto Perez

The Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii, founder of the Nipponzan Myohoji Order said this about nonviolence: “Nothing is resolved by policies favoring war. ... putting nonviolence into practice is not for the timid of heart. Nonviolence requires extraordinary courage.”

As an Afro-Cuban American, I grew up in El Barrio, one of the tenements of New York City. Today, I serve as a Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist monk. Our mission is making peace by walking, drumming, chanting for peace, by practicing Buddhist principles such as compassion and loving kindness, by building Peace Pagodas. The founder of our order knew Gandhi and was inspired by him in addition to Buddhist practice.

Here at Ground Zero there are angels surrounding the inspired and maladjusted. It is very easy to talk together...and just maybe we are the ones who are sane!

In January, we honor Martin Luther King. February is Black History month and many thoughts are on my mind. In the drumbeat of news, we hear about war and potential war...against Muslims, “terrorists,” other countries large and small, an epidemic of violence against women, how our lifestyles and war-making are assaulting Mother Earth. Conquest is favored over cooperation. Racism is alive and well.

Possibly I am more sensitive to the global violence, having grown up with extreme violence, and I’d like to say more about my experiences.

When I was eight years old, I happened to walk toward a white neighborhood called York Town which was no more than a mile or so south our tenement house on 96<sup>th</sup> Street. Some boys called me a “nigger” and threw rocks at me. I did not feel fear, just walked away, but turned around a few times to see if they would come for me; they did not, perhaps knowing where I lived. Reaching home I asked my Mother what “nigger” meant...she just answered sweetly “I do not know, my son.” Much later on I learned more such words – wop, mick, spic, kike and so on.

Arabs, Muslims, and Latinos, especially Mexicans, are our latest targets for exploitation and hate – all people of color. Dr. King said: “We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”

I imagined early on that our housing projects were a death and prison trap (and they still are). Most, if not all, of my childhood friends are dead, jailed, mentally and spiritually wasted from inner city violence or the Vietnam War. Seeing the suffering in my housing projects and not in other parts of New York, I could not keep silent. With my Irish friends, we met with several Jesuit novices who talked about reading the classics.

Soon I was reading Greek stories, like Crito’s argument to Socrates, The Iliad, Prometheus and the Allegory of the Cave. The Jesuits and ancient Greeks became guides for a young teenager in Spanish Harlem.

The significance of education became a beacon of light, a signpost to the door, otherwise it would be death...do not collect \$200... go straight to jail. This reality continues for children of color in the inner cities. Presently many inner city schools are being closed or teachers are being fired for lack of educational funds. I still ask, have the poor, the people of color, been forsaken?

Even though the door is more open, it is hard for many to escape the violence and drug culture.

Racism is one the most challenging issues confronting America. Many of us wonder if our current way of life is reaching its final breaths. In a nation which includes people of every ancestry from throughout the world, seeking the ideals of freedom and democracy (both lowercase), and whose motto is *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one), I can only find these words printed on money. I don’t think we can see our oneness unless we begin a very different way of seeing “what is.” It takes a strong heart to see and be willing to act, to prevent so much destruction whether it might come from use of nuclear weapons, another Fukushima, violence against women, or growing assaults on Mother Earth.

It has been some 50 years since Dr. King said: “No one is born hating another person because of the color of their skin, their background, or their religion. People must learn to hate. And if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love. For love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”



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**Br. Gilberto Perez** splits his time between Bainbridge Island and Mexico, and participates in Peace Walks in the US and globally.

# ***What was a nice girl like me doing in a place like that?***

## **One Woman's Transformative Experience**

By Mona Lee

I was not in the flotilla of little boats blocking USS Ohio, the first Trident Submarine to enter Hood Canal that chilly October morning in 1982. Instead I was working in the employee training division at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. During my coffee break, I sat at my desk listening to radio news of fire hoses blasting elderly women with icy water.

One of my duties as a training specialist was to find out the times and locations of weapons system training classes around the country so that shipyard workers could be sent to them. This meant staring at a computer screen filled with numbers like WK312 or QZ750. While doing this I would often wonder whether the person who detonated the next nuclear weapon would be sitting at a computer screen like I was, just doing their job. I had already been acquainted with my neighbors Jim and Shelly Douglas, founders of Ground Zero. I knew them through school and community events. I admired their integrity. So what was a nice girl like me doing in a place like that?

We had bought our little farm next door to the base, believing that we might earn a subsistent living and raise our children there. But the economy had changed since the publication of MG Kains' "Five Acres and Independence." We couldn't make ends meet on 7 1/2 acres of sheep, chickens, potatoes and squash, and the Navy was a big cash cow literally just over the fence.

I often wonder how many people working behind those 12 foot fences topped with concertina wire really believe their jobs benefit humankind. In the recent film "Promised Land" two employees of a corrupt, polluting corporation both learn how evil their work is, but only one of them quits. The other, a single mom, shrugs. "It's a job," she says. Maybe that's the way it is at Bangor. Quitting is a road less traveled for those coming home with a secure middle class paycheck.

While at Bangor, I witnessed many apparent acts of silent resistance. One occurred the morning SWFPAC was getting spruced up for a big open house. Glorified photos of Trident Submarines lined the hallways. But beside the guard station where I always got my morning coffee, I noticed prominently displayed on the bulletin board, a copy of the very same Ground Zero leaflet I had been handed that morning as I drove through the gate.

"That's a Ground Zero leaflet," I said to the guard sitting at the desk. The guard did not look up, "Chief put it there," he mumbled.

Another case in point was a little ritual that occurred frequently at SWFPAC. During noon hour the lunchroom on the ground floor surrounded by windows was always filled with the roar of chatter. But sometimes a big cylindrical trailer would roll by outside likely carrying a missile. Immediately the room would fall silent and remain hushed until the trailer passed out of sight. Perhaps this was a communal act of silent protest, a realization that even though we worked every

day at our desks doing seemingly harmless paper work, the end result was a missile carrying about 300 nuclear warheads with incredibly accurate first strike capability.

I believe that the reason people are able to pay taxes, work for, and otherwise support nuclear weapons is that at some level, we don't really believe in the reality of such senseless insanity. Recent word has it that President Obama wants to reduce the number of nuclear weapons to maybe only around 1,000 or 1,100. I believe that to most people these are abstract numbers on a computer screen. Most have never seen or touched a nuclear weapon. Unlike bows and arrows, tanks, or fighter planes, nuclear weapons are not usually displayed in museums. Most people have

never seen, let alone touched one of them. But when I transferred from Puget Sound Naval Shipyard to SWFPAC, I was taken on a tour of the missile factory. I stood very close to a Trident, reached out and touched it with the tip of my bare index finger. It felt cold, hard, and for the first time, very real. My entire body was instantly wracked with nausea.

What could possibly be the point of 1,000 nuclear warheads when you could easily count on your fingers the number of them the fallout from which could destroy all life on the planet? And in this post-911 world wherein fear is generated by the specter of "terrorism," the concept of "deterrence," which is based on the presumption that warfare strategy and decision making is the prerogative of established governments, no longer applies.

Even though SWFPAC was only about a mile from our farm, I had to drive 10 miles around the fence and



**Trading a job for a life.** Mona Lee left her job at Sub Base Kitsap Bangor after an epiphany.

***A nice girl like me... continued on page 7***



down the aptly named Trigger Avenue to get to work. Every Thursday morning before I drove through the gate, Carol Schulkin, who to this day is one of my heroes, would hand me a Ground Zero leaflet.

Thursday morning was also when the civilian personnel training division had its staff meeting. I would go into the conference room carrying the leaflet in one hand and my coffee cup in the other. As the other training specialists gathered for the meeting, I would sip my coffee and read the leaflet. During the meeting, I would take notes on the back of the leaflet. Later in the week when my supervisor came to my office to find out what I had accomplished, I would remove the leaflets from my desk and refer to the notes. I made these gestures and props very obvious and visible. It was an act of silent protest. But I wanted to do something much better with my life.

One particular Thursday morning when Schulkin handed me the leaflet, I started crying and wept all the way work. Something about the rightness and integrity of what she was doing and the hypocrisy of what I was doing struck me hard at that moment. Not long afterwards, I quit my job, thus cutting my family's income in half.

I felt bad about shorting my family, and soon heard about a counseling job opening at the Family Services

Center on Base. I have a Master's Degree in counseling psychology, so I filled out an application which I planned to deliver in person. I parked my car outside the gate and walked toward the guard house. But when I stepped across the line onto the Base, my body was again gripped by nausea. I turned around and left.

I only went back once, at Christmas a few years later, to hear Handel's Messiah played in the chapel. The chapel walls were hung with banners of the Trident Submarines, and they looked like devil's pitchforks. The power of the music and the walls hung with pitchforks made it feel like I was witnessing a prophecy about the end of the world.

After that, most of my career was in the field of vocational rehabilitation counseling, which I retired from in 2003. I have had several other vocations such as farming, activism, neighborhood organizing and writing. Two of my books are still available on Amazon.com: *Alien Child* and *Humbler than Dust; A Retired Couple Visits the Real India by Tandem Bicycle*.

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**Mona Lee** is an activist, an author, and an avid cyclist. She lives in Seattle where she owns and manages the Whistle Stop Co-op Café.

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## **“Engaging, soul-searching, and honest”**

Book Review by Frida Berrigan

Every once in a while, I come across a book that is so good I wish I had the idea first. Rosalie Riegle's *Doing Time For Peace: Resistance, Family and Community* — an edited volume of interviews with peace activists who have spent time in jails and prisons as members of families and communities — is that book for me right now.

It reads like she had a great time doing the project, which is based on nearly 200 interviews over a three year period. Rosalie Riegle has a light touch and did heavy edits. In the introduction, she writes that she followed the lead of the great oral historian Studs Terkel in applying a sharp knife to the ums and ahs and circular speech that stud people's speech as they think through and answer a question. The result is clear voices, thoughtful responses and riveting stories. Riegle knits the interviews together with her own words and explanations so that the readers can see how one resister inspires and motivates the next.

The chapter on the Berrigans is entitled, “Let's Do It Again” (a hilarious and also sort of terrifying title) and includes interviews with my sister, brother and myself. My sister Kate, who is now doing a doctorate in physical therapy in Philadelphia, was asked: Was it all wonderful at Jonah House (the re-

sistance community where we grew up)? “No, it wasn't,” she said. “It's hard when there's a lot of people in a relatively limited space... personalities clash and people need space and time to be alone.”

Some of the names in the volume will be familiar to students of and participants in the US peace movement, but there are no superstars here. These are men and women doing the hard work of raising families, building communities and being resisters — and they admit that it is not easy.

The chapter on the Plowshares movement is particularly interesting. Sister Anne Montgomery and Father Carl Katat were two members of the first Plowshares action, a symbolic disarmament of nuclear warheads in Pennsylvania in 1981. Since that time there have been more than 100 of these actions in the United States and throughout Europe.

Sister Anne, who died last year at the age of 85, shares that the Plowshares Eight “was sort of a shocker to many people, both outside the peace movement and in, because it was the first time we'd actually taken hammers to something. Some people consider the destruction of so-called property ‘violent.’”



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**Doing Time for Peace... continued on page 10**

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# What's another 3.7 million pounds of explosives on Puget Sound?

By Martha Baskin

A spring run of migrating salmon was the only thing behind the temporary halt of construction on a \$715 million explosives handling wharf at the Bangor Nuclear Submarine Base. The Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act and state water quality criteria prohibit in-water construction from mid-February to mid-July to protect spawning fish populations.

It's an ironic twist, say critics. The new wharf, the size of six football fields, could ultimately cause irreparable harm to salmon migration. A National Environmental Policy Act lawsuit was filed against the wharf last June by the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action; activist and researcher Glen Milner; and Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Until recently, the case was on hold after plaintiffs appealed a gag order imposed by the court at the Navy's request. The gag order sealed a number of records the Navy released after the lawsuit began and forbid plaintiffs to provide copies of the records or discuss them inside or outside the court.

It wasn't until after court proceedings had already begun in June that the Navy released documents showing that the Department of Defense Explosive Safety Board had refused to grant a permit for the new wharf because of its proximity to an existing wharf.

"At that point the Navy basically stopped discussion and granted themselves an exception to the rule," said Milner. He says the Navy chose a rare route for project approval, called the Secretary of the Navy Explosives Safety Certification, that allowed the Secretary of Navy to sign a statement saying it would assume responsibility for all risks.

"But it doesn't mean that it's safe," Milner warns. "It's actually a fairly dangerous operation." Milner has a long history of monitoring Naval activities in Puget Sound. In 1986, he discovered that rail cars carrying submarine missile rocket motors involved in a derailment contained large amounts of high explosives, contrary to Navy statements. In 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in his favor in *Milner v. Department of the Navy*, a case involving explosives handling issues at an ammunition depot on Indian Island.

The wharf, says Milner, would double the amount of explosives handled in Hood Canal. In total, the structure would handle 3.7 million pounds of TNT in the form of missile rocket propellant.

This week the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit court ruled that their first responsibility was to resolve issues raised by the suit. The case is moving forward, gag order intact, which will be ruled on at a later date. Postponing the decision on the gag order is as good as keeping it. Any decisions coming down the pike after the lawsuit won't do much for the safety of the explosives wharf.

The purpose of the National Environmental Policy Act,

under which the lawsuit was filed, is to alert the public to a project's environmental impact, says Kathy George, lead attorney for the plaintiffs. "In this case there was a lot of secrecy in the environmental review process. There were several appendices that were completely hidden from the public. One that was particularly important was the one having to do with explosive risks."

The lawsuit also contends that, despite the fact that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) acknowledged marine life would be impacted, they failed to present "meaningful alternatives" to a wharf that will cover 6.3 acres of water and require the drilling of 1,200 pilings. A core requirement of the

National Environmental Policy Act is that an EIS consider alternatives, not merely the implications of multiple sites, says attorney George.

Instead, the alternatives the Navy presented were different only in design. "The features identical in each were to actually replace the natural shoreline with concrete," George explains. "There were no alternatives presented to that. Destruction of a wetland, no alternative."

The Army Corp of Engineers and National Marine Fisheries Service approved construction of the wharf last May. In April, the EPA made recommendations and asked the Navy to disclose the feasibility of mitigating environmental destruction caused by the

new wharf. Under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Navy must compensate for the loss of marine habitat and wetlands.

Rather than taking responsibility for mitigation efforts though, they've chosen to write a big check, says attorney George. In this case, \$6.9 million, which works out to be a little over 1 percent of the construction cost. Where does the money go? As she puts it, toward unknown projects to be done at an unknown time in the future.

"There was absolutely no way for the public to understand how effective the mitigation would be, because there was no certainty at all where it would take place or how it would be approached," she said.

The environmental factor is not the only one dogging the wharf's construction. Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility joined the lawsuit because of their concern with the handling of nuclear weapons all over the world, and in this case, in Puget Sound. "The centering of that weapons system in the submarines with all the transfers that take place, all the handling; those risks ought to be recalculated in a NEPA statement," said spokesperson Tom Buchanan. "It's risks that all of us face and the Navy doesn't want to talk about it."



**One explosives handling wharf is one too many.** Photo courtesy of <http://nuclearabolitionist.blogspot.com>.

**Second wharf... continued on page 10**



# Update on Happenings at Ground Zero

By Connie Mears

Over the winter, Ground Zero has continued to expand its role as a “center” for nonviolence and nonviolent action. Influenced by the message Jim and Shelley Douglass shared during their visit last August, Ground Zero has been focusing on building relations within the Kitsap Community.

We’ve resumed leafleting at the base with messages that are non-confrontational, but informative or thought-provoking. We’ve had two movie nights, watching documentaries followed by discussion. Supported by your donations, we purchased an AV system that will enhance this fledgling program.

One of our most successful endeavors has been the “Activists’ Potluck.” We put out the call to activists working on any issue and even those working on building a better world through nonviolent means, such as Time Bank folks and the Food Coop group. More than 30 people showed up to our last event, including representatives of Idle No More, Move to Amend, MoveOn.org, YES! Magazine editor Sarah van Gelder, and a group of young activists who live in Kitsap.

In 2003, just before the start of the Iraq War, local activists came together, many of them Ground Zero members, and created a human peace sign in Evergreen Park. A photo was taken and postcards were made with the tagline, “Kitsap Wants Peace.” Wendy McNeal, co-founder of SPARK (Solidarity and Peaceful Actions by Kitsap Residents) introduced the idea to a few people who had been to the Activists’ Potluck. They formed a Facebook Working Group and planned a day to re-create the photo for the 10-year anniversary with the message: “Kitsap STILL Wants Peace.”

Mary Gleysteen’s photo was featured in the Kitsap Sun, and Sue Ablao’s commitment to peace was captured by photographer and Seattle Occupy mainstay Alex Garland.



**Japanese anemone** blossoms pink and purple flowers from August through October.

## Peace Garden

Winter has taken its toll this year with a good amount of blowdown. Tom Rogers came out with a chainsaw to piece up some of the larger branches. I’ve been out with pruners and other tools to tackle some of the understory and fight back the blackberries and Scotch broom.

Last fall, a handful of Ground Zero regulars (Mary Gleysteen, Cathy Palkill, Sue Ablao, Lynne Greenwald, Betsy Collins and myself) spent a few hours planting some spring bulbs. The effort is paying off as the flowers are now emerging with their spring colors, brightening up the grounds.

If you’re in the area and would like to roll up your sleeves and work in the dirt, we’ll be having a work party before the April Stewardship Council meeting, on April 13, from 10 am to 1 pm. We’re hoping to rent or borrow a chipper to turn fallen limbs into usable chips for paths.

If you haven’t taken a peak at the video for the Peace Garden vision, log on to our Facebook page by searching the words Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. Then click the icon for “videos.”

The first section we’ll be tackling is the area by the stupa, turning it into a pocket Japanese-style garden. We’ve already had donations of some lovely “black bamboo” with its striking black stalks, as well as some iris and Japanese anemone. We’re hoping for a Japanese maple and a Hinoki Cypress, too. We’ll be laying some stone steps, which will lead to a sand “lake” around a grouping of rocks.

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**Connie Mears** has long been active in the cause of peace and justice. She serves as Caretaker of the Ground Zero House.

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## Ground Zero Book Club, Anyone?

By Tom Shea

Ground Zero newsletter readers unite! Bond with family, friends, in your neighborhoods, coffee shops, or library. Build a small, but beautiful, book club on Ground Zero related topics.

For instance—read, talk, and listen to others discuss Rosalie Riegle’s books “Crossing the Line” and “Doing Time for Peace” (review on page 7). Riegle will be the keynote speaker at our Saturday, May 11, Mother’s Day gathering at Ground Zero Center. The book “Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for the Revolution” provides a lot of ways to grow the work of our Ground Zero. Bernie Meyer has copies of “Nuclear Weapons and International Humanitarian Law” from John Burroughs. Obviously, groups can choose their own books, hopefully relating to some aspect of our work to abolish Trident and

all nuclear weapons. Use your own questions to start discussions, or try these: What did you like or not like about the book? Why? What was the book’s highlight for you? Would you recommend the book? Have you talked to anyone else about the book? The Ground Zero Center newsletter boasts over a thousand readers. Whether you can make it to the center or not, a Ground Zero Book Club can be a real help to further enlarging our connections worldwide.



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**Tom Shea** co-chairs the Communications Committee for Ground Zero, and organized the Ground Zero 2013 MLK action.

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I think Dan Berrigan gives the best one-sentence definition of property: 'Property is what enhances human life.' If it kills human life, it's not true property, because it's not what's proper to human life.' Right On! This is decades before Occupy and the contentious debate between nonviolent activists and those

committed to embracing a "diversity of tactics."

While the chapter includes a number of Plowshares voices (repeat offenders and one time actors), there are also thoughtful critiques of the movement from respected voices within the peace movement. Jim Forest, a member of the Milwaukee 14 draft board action and a peace activist now living in Holland, told

Riegle, "For me, disarmament is when a person

who has a weapon puts it away, melts it down." He says that talking about symbolic "acts of disarmament" is "just American hype." The real question for him is "how do we change? How do we become a converted people?"

These are questions the Transform Now Plowshares is trying to answer. The trio — Sister Megan Rice, a nun in her 80s along with Catholic Workers Michael Walli and Greg Boertje-Obed — cut through fences at the Y-12 Security Complex in Oakridge, Tenn., one of most secure sites on the planet, in July 2012. They poured their blood and hung banners around the new, half-billion dollar Highly Enriched Uranium Materials Facility there, which stores enough nuclear material to make thousands of weapons. Sister Megan told New York Times reporter William Broad that she and her fellow activists acted to expose "the criminality of this 70-year industry. ... We spend more on nuclear arms than on the departments of education, health, transportation, disaster relief and a number of other government agencies that I can't remember."

Their witness garnered front-page coverage, worldwide attention and the opprobrium of the Department of Energy, which oversees the Y-12 facility. If found guilty of all charges, the three face more than 30 years in prison. Greg's wife Michele Naar-Obed, a Catholic Worker, Plowshares activist and mother, is interviewed in *Doing Time*.

Riegle also talks with earlier activists about the heavy burden of long jail sentences, and interviewed spouses of Plowshares activists who talked frankly about the difficulties of maintaining and building a loving relationship while separated by prison, and spoke with a young Plowshares activist sentenced to eight years in prison. She related to Riegle her struggles with her family and with feelings of powerless in prison, and she now says: "I would not do it again... today, I would only be willing to face such an extreme consequence — eight years in prison — for actions that are directly saving a life."

In his second inaugural address, President Barack Obama paid homage to the activists of the past by referencing Seneca Falls, Selma and Stonewall. Scapegoated, jailed, beaten, misunderstood, alienated — those activists paid a high price for their work and witness. By collecting the thoughts of some of today's strongest resisters in this engaging, soul-searching and honest volume, Rosalie Riegle helps inspire and motivate us for the long haul of peace work. Let's do it again!

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**Frida Berrigan** serves on the Board of the War Resisters League and is a columnist for *Waging Nonviolence*.

Milner isn't waiting for a legal decision to try and stop construction of the new explosives wharf or the on-site mitigation he believes appropriate. Last week he attended a meeting of the Hood Canal Coordinating Council, an inter-agency coalition of counties, government agencies, tribes and others who are deciding how to spend the \$6.9 million the Navy agreed upon in lieu of on-site mitigation.

Milner is critical of the council's willingness to administer the federal in-lieu fee program which allows developers, or in this case the Navy, to pay a fee to a third party to conduct mitigation. He questioned whether the Navy's second Explosives Handling Wharf was eligible for "in-lieu fee" mitigation.

The council's Scott Brewer takes a more practical view of the decision. "What is appealing to the Navy is they don't have to be in the business of being in mitigation and figuring out what projects. They can just hire somebody — the coordinating council in this case — to figure out what's appropriate mitigation." He's not sure what projects the council will take on, but there's no shortage of wetlands, shoreline or habitat in need of restoration in Hood Canal.

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**Martha Baskin** is an environmental reporter. This article originally appeared on *Crosscut*, a Northwest news site located at [www.crosscut.com](http://www.crosscut.com).

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## **"Beautiful Trouble" inspires and informs**

By Tom Shea

The book "Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution" provides 148 tools for nonviolent activists. Each tool, covered in its own short chapter, has detailed descriptions for use and often examples and pictures. For example, one tool explained in the book is the artistic vigil. This doesn't necessarily mean wearing costumes and face paint and using puppets (though it could). It means thoughtful symbolism, the right tone and a distinct look and feel that clearly convey meaning. An artistic vigil often draws upon ritual elements, and uses the power of the ritual to both deepen the experience of participants and demonstrate that experience to observers.

Each detailed description contains examples, and includes sidebars for related topics to the tool. The sidebars connect the specific tool to relevant topics: tactics, principles, theories, case studies and practitioners.

Looking through the book is like a treasure hunt for good plans. Naomi Klein calls "Beautiful Trouble" "a crash course in the emerging field of carnivalesque realpolitic, both elegant and incendiary."

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**Tom Shea** co-chairs the Communications Committee for Ground Zero. A longtime member of Veterans for Peace, he lives in Seattle.

# POSTCARDS, FILMS, T-SHIRTS, and BUMPERSTICKERS

## DVDs and CDs

**"CONVICTION"** a documentary about three Dominican nuns, including Sr. Jackie Hudson, sentenced to Federal Prison for their nonviolent protest at a Minuteman III missile site in Northern Colorado. DVD. Item # F-1; \$25 for personal use, \$40 for public performance showings

**"WALKING FOR PEACE"** This 29-minute film documents the spiritual and physical journey of a 300 mile walk, from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation to Bangor Submarine Base. DVD. Item # F-2; \$10

**"FREE WORLD"** A documentary with original music on the "Journey of Repentance" in which 18 people traveled to Japan to atone for the atomic bombings. DVD. Item # F-3; \$15

**"GENIE OUT OF THE BOTTLE—UNLEASHED"** An examination of how nuclear weapons came to be, made by two 14 year-old boys from Chicago. DVD. Item # F-4; \$10

**"ONE BOMB AWAY—CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT FOR NUCLEAR AWARENESS"** Previously a book, it is now available on CD and a great primer for those both new and veteran in the abolition movement. CD. Item # F-5; \$10

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White and red on blue. Item # S-1  
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### Abolish Nuclear Weapons

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Long sleeve, and sizes 2XL and 3XL:

\$20 or 2 for \$38 (long sleeve not available in 2XL or 3XL)

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Shipping: please add \$3.50 per shirt or film and/or \$1.50 per 10 bumper stickers or postcards				SHIPPING =	
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\_\_\_\_ Please call me; I want to start leafleting at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard \_\_\_\_ or downtown Seattle \_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_ Please contact me about having a Ground Zero speaker come to speak to my group, church, school or union.

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Mail orders and donations in US funds to Ground Zero at 16159 Clear Creek Rd. NW, Poulsbo, WA 98370

Phone: 360-930-8697 E-mail: [info@gzcenter.org](mailto:info@gzcenter.org) Website: [www.gzcenter.org](http://www.gzcenter.org)



# GROUND ZERO

**GROUND ZERO CENTER  
FOR NONVIOLENT ACTION**  
16159 Clear Creek Road NW  
Poulsbo, WA 98370

**Phone:** 360-930-8697  
**Website:** [www.gzcenter.org](http://www.gzcenter.org)  
**E-mail:** [info@gzcenter.org](mailto:info@gzcenter.org)

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*“Our deepest fear is not that we  
are inadequate. Our deepest  
fear is that we are powerful beyond  
measure.”*

*— Marianne Williamson*

## Speak Truth to Power— in Unexpected Ways

By Connie Mears and Tom Shea

From memes and manifestos, to protest songs and Wikileaks documents: Truth has power. Howard Zinn said, “The most revolutionary act one can engage in is... to tell the truth.” One does not have to be a great orator to speak truth to power. Rosa Parks’ simple, but powerful “No” comes to mind.

Julia Ward Howe, after witnessing the carnage of the Civil War, spoke truth with her “Mothers Day Proclamation” in 1870. An appeal for “all women who have hearts” to unite for peace in the world, her poem was the precursor of the modern Mother’s Day.

*“Our husbands will not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience. We, the women of one country, will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.”*

Ground Zero will gather Saturday, May 11 to celebrate the power of words (combined with action) under the theme “Speak Truth to Power.” Rosalie Riegler will speak (and sign books). We’ll engage in nonviolence training, hear poems peace and violence, and write letters before vigiling at Bangor.

After the action, folks can stay for dinner and a documentary.

If you can’t come to Ground Zero’s event, Tom Shea is inviting people to participate right where they live.

“Can’t get to Ground Zero Center for Mothers Day?” he suggests. “Why not celebrate Julia Ward Howe’s original Mother’s Day Proclamation somewhere near where you live. You can write a leaflet, quoting Howe’s poem, or we can provide you with a master leaflet for use. The book ‘Beautiful Trouble’ says ‘Make it fun. Make it unusual. Make it memorable.... People are more likely to take your leaflet, read it, and remember what it’s all about if you deliver it with flair.’ Flair can mean holding roses, using masks, dressing up old-style like the Raging Grannies, or blowing a kazoo, singing a

song, or using a tambourine. A classic example was Ground Zero activists marching in the Martin Luther King parade, shepherding our 44-foot inflatable missile with the King’s quote on the side.”



**Connie Mears** serves as Caretaker for the Ground Zero House, and **Tom Shea** serves on the Communications Committee. **Leonard Eiger** took the photo at the Martin Luther King Day march in Seattle this past January.