

Ground Zero

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Another Successful Mitigation Hearing Follows Antinuclear Action



By Mack Johnson

On November 7, 2017, Kitsap District Court was the setting for the latest in a series of mitigation hearings by members of the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action.

Seven activists had entered the roadway during a vigil against nuclear war and promoting the end of the Trident nuclear weapons system: Charley Smith of Eugene; Sarah Hobbs of Portland; Phil Davis of Bremerton; Benjamin Moore of Bainbridge Island; Susan Delaney of Bothell; Ryan DeWitt of Olympia; and Mack Johnson of Silverdale. The last four people chose a mitigation hearing to explain the circumstances and reasoning behind their action.

Judge Kevin Kelly presided; he had observed previous mitigation hearings and listened attentively. Defendants gave powerful prepared statements attesting to their acts of conscience. Susan presented evidence of dozens of military nuclear-weapons accidents during the Cold War; Ben spoke of Thoreau's call to resist unjust laws; Ryan highlighted the contrast between the few nuclear states' drive to maintain nuclear stockpiles and the desire of the overwhelming majority of nations and billions of individuals for a world free of nuclear weapons. Mack followed with evidence that nuclear weapons violate sev-

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eral treaties the USA has signed (and enforces selectively around the world!) and a few facts about the immense power of these bombs that should make their use unthinkable.

Judge Kelly acknowledged the mitigants' com-

mitment and sincerity, found that they had committed the infraction, and lowered the fines of all four from \$68 to \$25, the lowest amount he could legally assign. There have now been several years of mitigation hearings by Ground Zero activists, with all resulting in reduced fines and one outright dismissal of charges in October 2016.

"Never again!" Ground Zero activists commemorated the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 14, 2017. From left to right, Susan DeLaney, Philip Davis, and Charles Smith hold banners as they enter the roadway. *Photo by Leonard Eiger.*



It was a very positive and moving experience for the participants, their supporters, and even the courtroom staff. The court clerk stated afterwards that she had been clerk during Ground Zero's first White Train trial in 1985, and that she had been moved to tears then when she read that jury's verdict (not guilty). Ground Zero members expect to continue their efforts to inform the public about nuclear weapons through direct action and mitigation in the future.

Mack Johnson retired from a long teaching career, and lives with his wife Lisa in Silverdale. **Mary Gleysteen** took the photo on the cover.

"Why Did I Stand in the Road?" My Statement to the Court

By Susan DeLaney

I was born in Seattle 70 years ago and in all those years I have been a follower of rules and a law-abiding citizen. I have never received a citation from the police, not even a traffic ticket. This is the first time. So why did I decide to get up early one morning and deliberately break the law? Why did I go stand in the road?

Let me explain. Most people in the Seattle area don't know about the existence of the Bangor Submarine base located right in our front yard. When the base was being built decades ago, there were big protests against it being constructed here but now that is mostly forgotten. I believe it is time to remind people that the base is dangerous and very close to home. And so as a way to call attention to the issue, I decided to stand in the road to see if anyone would want



Susan DeLaney prepares to enter the roadway in August. *Photo by Leonard Eiger.*

to know why I did that.

What are the dangers of having more than half of our nuclear-armed submarines serviced in one location? The situation reminds me of Pearl Harbor where the Pacific fleet was concentrated in one place making it possible for Japan to destroy all the ships in one attack.

In addition to all the nuclear missiles deployed on multiple submarines, Bangor is a storage site for other nuclear weapons. All of this makes our region a first strike target and an accident waiting to happen.

I have a list here of 75 different military nuclear accidents and those are just the ones that are on the public record. That says to me that the probability of a significant accident

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Join Ground Zero to Honor Martin Luther King's Call for Nuclear Disarmament

By Mary Gleysteen

In honor of Dr Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action will hold a vigil at the Main Gate of the Trident Submarine Base at Bangor Saturday, January 13 at 11:00 am.

According to Vincent Intondi, author of "African Americans Against the Bomb," King believed that civil rights are inextricably linked to peace:

When asked in December 1957 about the use of nuclear weapons, King replied:

"I definitely feel that the development and use of nuclear weapons should be banned. It cannot be disputed that a full-scale nuclear war would be utterly catastrophic. Hundreds and millions of people would be killed outright by the blast and heat, and by the ionizing radiation produced at the instant of the explosion . . . Even countries not directly hit by bombs would suffer through global fall-outs. All of this leads me to say that the principal objective of all nations must be the total abolition of war. War must be finally eliminated or the whole of mankind will be plunged into the abyss of annihilation."

King remained committed to the antinuclear cause throughout the Civil Rights Movement. In 1959, five months after being stabbed in Harlem, King addressed the War Resisters League's thirty-sixth annual dinner, where he praised its work and linked the domestic struggle for racial justice with the campaign for global disarmament: "Not only in the South, but throughout the nation and the world, we live in an age of conflicts, an age of biological weapons, chemical warfare, atomic fall-out and nuclear bombs . . . Every man, woman, and child

lives, not knowing if they shall see tomorrow's sunrise." He asked, "What will be the ultimate value of having established social justice in a context where all people, Negro and White, are merely free to face destruction by strontium 90 or atomic war?"



"Nuclear weapons should be banned." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. refused to "accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of nuclear annihilation."

Everyone interested in honoring Dr. King's prophecy and legacy is invited to attend the vigil. Participants will gather at 10:30 am January 13, at the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action in Poulsbo, and walk to the base for a vigil which will include songs, signs, banners and quotes from Dr. King.

For more information contact info@groundzerocenter.org, or call Mary Gleysteen at 360-297-3894.

Mary Gleysteen lives in Kingston. She has been active with Ground Zero since the days of the White Train demonstrations.

"Why Did I Stand in the Road?"... continued from page 2

is just a matter of time. The consequences of an accidental detonation or a release of nuclear materials is terrifying. These realities must be recognized. That is why I stood in the road.

There is a great precedent for changing things. Up until 1991, our country had nuclear bombers on alert in the sky 24 hours a day. There were numerous accidents and close calls. A conservative Republican president, George Bush Sr., made the wise decision to end that era. In 1991 he stood down the bombers. I still remember hearing about it on the evening news.

It is time to take another big step to make our world a safer place. Attention must be directed to the problem before people will start figuring out how to change things. I know that my protest was small and that it was not enough but I am not discouraged. Mother Teresa taught us that doing the right thing may not be enough, but that we should do the right thing anyway. I believe that there is a special responsibility for what happens in our own front yard. And so that is why I stood in the road.

Susan DeLaney lives in Bothell.

Ground Zeroistas Speak at Community Events

By Mack Johnson and Elizabeth Murray

Tom Rogers and Chris Rogers were part of a presentation on nuclear abolition organized by Olympic Peninsula Progressives in Post Angeles, Washington on December 10, 2017, the date of the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. The event included videos on ICAN and of a survivor of the Hiroshima atomic bombing, folk songs, a panel presentation, and the opportunity to send postcards to Congress limiting the president's ability to order a first-strike nuclear attack on another nation, and requiring Congressional approval for any preemptive strike.

Tom Rogers was the featured speaker, and gave a detailed presentation on the dangers of nuclear weapons, their immorality, and the need for abolition to prevent nuclear catastrophe.

It is good in these troubled times to see the anti-nuclear message reach into the Washington hinterlands! The Olympic region faces problems from militarism such as Growler overflights, electronic surveillance in the national forests, and threats to marine mammals. Ground Zero hopes that this connection with the Olympic Peninsula will continue.



Olympic Peninsula Progressives' members organized an educational and outreach event to coincide with the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony. *Photo by Colleen O'Brien.*

Earlier in the fall, on November 21, Tom Rogers and Elizabeth Murray spoke at the Port Orchard Rotary Club's regular breakfast meeting. They each told their stories of how they came to be at Ground Zero and then addressed the moral, ethical and technical/practical reasons for nuclear disarmament. Elizabeth cited relevant quotes John F. Kennedy's 1963 landmark address at American University on the need for the US to examine its own mindset toward peace and the adversary. She drew parallels between Cold War attitudes and the current tensions with both Russia and North Korea. Elizabeth noted that the US failure to come to the table to discuss nuclear disarmament at

the UN was a missed leadership opportunity.

Tom spoke convincingly of the wastefulness of nuclear weapons and the fact that they are completely unnecessary. He also spoke to their evil nature and said that millions of innocent civilians would be annihilated by a deliberate strike or nuclear accident.

The Rotary audience was gracious, attentive and polite — but it was clear that many folks had reservations about the points Elizabeth and Tom were making. During the question-and-answer period, one Rotarian insisted that any conciliatory moves by North Korea could only be the direct result of US military muscle. Still, several people approached Elizabeth and Tom afterward to acknowledge the madness of nuclear weapons.

We were grateful for Rotary's invitation — which came about when one Rotarian contacted Elizabeth after reading her recent op-ed on ICAN's winning of the Nobel Peace Prize in the Kitsap Sun — and remain hopeful that we gave them something to think about. A few of the Rotarians took home the Ground Zero newsletters, postcards, and business cards that were provided at each table.



Tom Rogers speaking to the waste of nuclear weapons. *Photo by Colleen O'Brien.*

Planning Underway for Earth Day 2018

Again this year, Ground Zero will participate in Seattle's Earth Day march and rally on Saturday, April 21. For further information, or to help with planning, contact Michael "Firefly" Siptroth at fly-bill2@aol.com.



Mack Johnson serves as Ground Zero secretary. **Elizabeth Murray** serves as Member-in-Residence at the Ground Zero Center.

Annual Meeting Provides Chance to Review, and to Plan

By Mary Gleysteen

Ground Zero's 2017 Annual Meeting was kicked off with a batch of fortune cookies, which attendees read opened and read as they reviewed last year's accomplishments. In summary, our talents and abilities have been recognized and fortune will smile on Ground Zero in the coming year.



"Never again!" Three of the blockaders hold a banner calling for diplomacy with North Korea. *Photo by Leonard Eiger.*

The group discussed the actions and activities of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Earth Day, Mother's Day, the Ground Zero 40th Anniversary, the Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration, the Peace Fleet, Boats by Bangor, the summer Peace Walk, the bus ads, the lawsuit against the Explosive Handling Wharf, the court trials and mitigation hearings, the Washington Coalition to Stop the New Nuclear Arms Race, international travels by members, and all the media and outreach activities in support of these events.

The meeting also offered the opportunity to discuss the status of long-term projects. Senji Kanaeda reported on the plans for the Peace Pagoda, and anticipates being able to apply for a building permit soon. Leonard Eiger shared the message of the No to New Trident Campaign — "Do you want to live in a world free of the threat of nuclear war?"

Next, officers were selected for the Stewardship Council. The group expressed appreciation to Mary Hanson for having faithfully served as chair longer than anyone else in recent memory.

Co-Chairs: Michael Hill and Tom Rogers

Secretary: Mack Johnson, with Mary Gleysteen as "understudy"

Treasurer: Bob Trutnau

At large positions: 1. Senji Kanaeda, Lani Kawasaki

(Gilberto Perez), 2. Rodney Brunelle, Mary Hanson (Ed Digilio) 3. Michael Siptroth, Caroline Wildflower

Member in Residence: Elizabeth Murray

House and Grounds Committee: Tom Rogers, Mack Johnson, Denny and Ben Moore

Caretaker: Tom Rogers, Mack Johnson, Glen Milner, Elizabeth Murray

Leafleting: Elizabeth Murray, Mary Gleysteen, Mack Johnson, Tom and Chris Rogers, Rodney Brunelle

Media/Communications and Outreach: Leonard Eiger, Mona Lee, Mary Hanson, Rodney Brunelle and Glen Milner

Legal Research: Glen Milner

Website: Connie Mears, Leonard Eiger

Financial Planning/Budget: Bob Trutnau, Bernie Meyer and Tim Russell

Newsletter: Alice Zillah

Thank-you notes: Betsy Collins

Too much to list: Sue Ablao

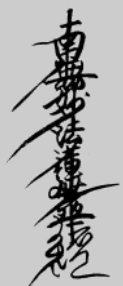
With your support, we look forward to 2018 and the chance to strengthen our resolve to rid the world of Trident.

Mary Gleysteen serves on the Stewardship Council, and regularly distributes leaflets to incoming motorists at the Bangor Main Gate.

Peace Walk Starting January 10

The Nipponzan Myohoji Bainbridge Island Temple is planning its annual Peace Walk in honor of Martin Luther King. The walk, "Towards a Harmonious Society and Nuclear-Free World," will begin on Wednesday, January 10, in Tacoma. It will continue through Seattle before crossing to Poulsbo for the January 13 Ground Zero vigil at Sub-Base Bangor. The following day, the walk will travel through Bainbridge Island, before returning to Seattle for the MLK day rally and march in Seattle, on Monday, January 15.

All are welcome to join the walk for any amount of time. For more information, contact Rev. Senji Kanaeda at 206-724-7632, or kanaedasenji@gmail.com, and Peter Guadalupe at 253-226-9905, or peterguadalupe@hotmail.com.



Insights from India

The Convergence of Climate Change and the Nuclear Threat

By Bernie Meyer

I left for India on September 20. Hurricane Harvey had devastated southern Texas breaking records for rainfall with 50 inches in a day and more coming, the second 500 year storm in three years.

Hurricane Irma was laying waste to the islands in the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico. Hurricane Maria was on the way. Meanwhile, forest fires were burning the western states from California to Montana. These fire storms would burn 8.5 million acres, including homes in the Napa Valley and Orange County, killing 24 people.



Bernie Meyer, center, stands with young activists at the 12th Global Youth Peace Fest. The Fest, held in three cities, convened over 200 leaders and peace activists from over 25 countries. *Photo courtesy of www.newznew.com.*

At the same time in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh record breaking monsoons were dumping water, covering one third of Bangladesh and killing over 1,200 people. These were subsistence poor people who could only walk in water waste deep with thatch homes and crops destroyed. In the summer record heat was recorded in Pakistan, reaching 127 degrees Fahrenheit. The long-term forecast vision for India is scorching heat as the century progresses.

During these months North Korea's President Kim Jong Un was challenging and reacting to the United States and President Trump. No one can predict what will happen, but there could be nuclear exchanges if war ensues. Meanwhile, there is little awareness about the growing threats of war between the US and Russia and China.

My number-one mission in going to India was to share Gandhi's perspective on the Atom Bomb and warn about the nuclear threat today. Equally real is the shrinking time (until the year 2020) to constrain the most serious

devastation from anthropogenic climate destruction.

I spent six weeks visiting six locations, each with many appearances, throughout India. I shared documents about my nuclear resistance actions, and screened John Pilger's documentary, "The Coming War on China." There were only limited discussions about nuclear weapons. While most people seemed to have consciousness about the climate concerns, there were no significant discussions about the implications.

My perception was that people are living their

lives as usual in the "old normal." But what is needed is complete mobilization to change our way of life, which is no longer a life in normal times. And, to abolish nuclear weapons.

As if to highlight my mission and message, at the end of my six weeks, Truth-Out made available Helen Caldwell's new book, "Sleepwalking to Armageddon: The Threat of Nuclear Annihilation." And, the journalist Dhar Jamail posted "Climate Disruption Could Pose 'Existential Threat' by 2050" on Truth-Out, and a second article, "Scientists Warn of 'Ecological Armageddon' Amid Waves of Heat and Climate Refugees," both in October.

On *Democracy Now* in early December, Amy Goodman and Dennis Moynihan interviewed Daniel Ellsberg about nuclear weapons and his new book, "The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner." In it, he details his early years at the Pentagon, and why he took and released thousands of pages of US plans describing the lunacy of nuclear war policy over 55 years ago.

Democracy Now also interviewed author Robert Jay Lifton, about his new book, titled "The Climate Swerve: Reflections on Mind, Hope, and Survival." Lifton is 91 years old and has devoted his life to interviewing people in horrible situations, both victims and victimizers. He is a psychiatrist and an activist. It's highly worthwhile to listen to his perspective on President Trump and the current challenges we face.

Bernie Meyer has long been involved with Ground Zero and the struggle to end war. He portrays the Mahatma Gandhi in the US and in India. .

Nobel Peace Prize: No time to rest on our laurels

By Leonard Eiger

This is a time of grave danger to all of humanity. Never has it been more evident how few people have so much control over the fate of humanity. We quite literally live in (as author Elaine Scarry calls it) a “Thermonuclear Monarchy.”

The story of the nuclear abolition movement has been something akin to the fable of the Little Dutch Boy who holds his finger in the dike to keep it from flooding the city. However, in our version of the story, the child has had that finger in the dike for what seems an eternity, and the waters behind the dike have risen and fallen many times over the years. All along, most people have walked by and ignored the child. The few who paid attention told the city’s leaders, who always explained that all was well; that they had things well under control. And now, once again the waters are so near the top of the dike that the child feels the water as it splashes over the lip. The pressure on the bulging dike is phenomenal, and the citizens can clearly see the dike bowing bulging as it nears the breaking point. Yet, most go about their daily routine, and the city leaders continue telling the people that all is well, the dike is doing its job. When asked about the child, the city leaders say that, “The child is just playing a child’s game, pretending to hold back the water. We adults have everything under control. The system that we have developed has worked as intended all these years, and will continue to work. Trust us.”

The people have heard these words over and over. They have been taught to respect the authority of their leaders, to believe whatever they are told by them. And indeed, the world is a dangerous place.

News outlets have continually raised the issue of tensions between the US and North Korea over the past year. It has been a story of reciprocal, and escalating, taunts between Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un, two leaders whose egos and hubris get in the way of their responsibilities to their people. Trump, the leader of one of two nations possessing roughly 93 percent of the world’s nuclear weapons, has initiated not only the taunts, but both direct and indirect threats of nuclear violence against North Korea, the result of which would be the loss of millions of lives on the entire Korean peninsula, Japan, and Guam, and possibly elsewhere.

“2018 will be a make-or-break year, in which we must use every creative strategy available to engage a massive upwelling of global citizen support for abolition.”

One of the greatest problems currently plaguing the US movement to abolish nuclear weapons is the overwhelming plethora of other issues overshadowing this most urgent issue. And there is no end of irony here. Politicians make absolutely ridiculous decisions to gut the Affordable Care Act, dismember regulatory entities intended to protect the public health and welfare, give yet more tax advantages to those already possessing the vast majority of the nation’s wealth, and pass a \$700 billion military spending bill for the simple reason that they benefit financially from these decisions. Yet, they have no clue that the inevitable use of nuclear weapons will be the great equalizer.

The good news is that civil society has done extraordinary things, culminating in 2017 with 122 nations creating a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) winning the Nobel Peace Prize. Each of these accomplishments represents the collective actions of countless citizens, organizations, diplomats, parliamentarians and others working in concert for the benefit of humanity. And the ban treaty is an extraordinary example of the best of the United Nations.

2018 will be a make-or-break year, a year in which we must maintain and build upon the momentum created in 2017, and use every creative strategy available to engage a massive upwelling of global citizen support for abolition. We will need to build alliances across every movement. We will need to reach deep within people’s hearts and minds to gain their attention and support. We will need to ask the difficult, but necessary, questions. We must develop a global citizen-led movement unlike any in the history of the nuclear abolition movement.

I still feel a lightness and hope. That hope is based on the knowledge that each of you reading these words holds a light within you, and that together our light will ultimately drive away the darkness that has persisted throughout the nearly three quarters of a century of the nuclear age.

Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action is honored to be part of this movement working to give humanity a more secure future. We will continue speaking truth to power and helping build a movement that will be impossible for the Thermonuclear Monarchs to ignore. Congratulations to all who have brought us this far, and here’s to the work yet to be done!

Leonard Eiger chairs the Media Committee of the Stewardship Council. He regularly posts at the blog nuclearabolitionist.blogspot.com.

GROUND ZERO

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*“Governments say a nuclear
weapons ban is unlikely.
Don't believe them. They said the same
thing about a mine ban treaty.”*

— Jody Williams, Nobel Laureate

Next Pacific Life Gathering Planned for March 2-4

From Press Release

The Pacific Life Community (PLC) is a network of spiritually motivated advocates for nuclear abolition and human rights in general. We are committed to ending nuclear weapons and war-making through nonviolent direct action along the Pacific Rim in collaboration with the global peace movement.

The next annual gathering of the PLC will be on March 2, 3, and 4, 20 2018, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The weekend will start with check-in on Friday at the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, followed by a vigil at the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). Dinner and an evening session will come after the vigil. On Saturday there will be sessions and panels at the Catholic Worker.



Praying for the will to make peace. Participants at the 2013 vigil and action following the PLC Gathering, held in Bremerton, as they knelt on the federal side of the blue line. *Photo by Mike Wisniewski.*

On Sunday, the day will begin with a liturgy at the Nevada National Security Site. Participants will be treated to a public concert in the afternoon, followed by dinner and a closing ceremony.

All meals from Friday dinner until Sunday dinner will be provided. Housing options will be sent later.

The Gathering will feature guest speakers Eileen Shaughnessy, speaking on “Building Youth Consciousness,” and Carol Gilbert, O.P. and Ardeth Platte, O.P. speaking to the renewed “Ban the Bomb Campaign.”

Ground Zero is a member of the Pacific Life Community, which was reconvened in 2007. For more information about the PLC, see www.pacificlifecommunity.wordpress.com, or email mail@lvcw.org.