

# Ground Zero

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## Two Nightmares in Beautiful Puget Sound: Global Pandemic and Nuclear War



By Mona Lee

At some level, human civilization has long been aware of the likelihood of a deadly global pandemic. For decades, scientists and governments have warned of that probable scenario. Like the prospect of nuclear war, we have always known of the possibility of a pandemic, but most people never fully believed the nightmare would come true until it did. Now we are living it. Our hospitals and health care preparedness are strained to the breaking point, Masses of people have lost their means of livelihood. Hundreds of thousands are dying

Likewise, we have long known that nuclear war is possible. In fact, we know full well that there are enough deployed nuclear weapons to wipe out life on the planet several times over. Yet ironically, human awareness of nuclear weapons tends to be suspended in the same kind of disbelief as the likelihood of a pandemic was before we awoke in the midst of it.

My family has always had a greater awareness of nuclear weapons than most. I raised my children on a small farm next door to the Trident Base. My son still lives there. Living in the shadow of the bomb, we have realized that what we are experiencing with the pandemic is minimal collateral damage in comparison to what even the smallest nuclear war would do. After vaporizing our farm, an exchange of maybe only 1% of the world's nuclear stockpile would overwhelm emergency response capabilities and impact climate change enough to cause a global famine. The world's production, trade and communications systems would be devastated. Radiation sickness would abound, and civilization would ultimately be reduced to a more primitive state.

Nuclear weapons may seem like an issue that can be addressed later, but the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists

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has set the Doomsday Clock at 100 seconds to midnight which means we are closer to nuclear war than we have ever been. Yet the Trump Administration continues to encourage a new arms race by destroying treaties, increasing nuclear weapons spending, and building new nuclear weapons. Instead our government should be engaging other nuclear armed nations in negotiations to eliminate this threat to life on earth.

The 2021 US budget includes nearly \$49 billion for nuclear weapons, enough money to purchase 460 mil-



lion COVID 19 test kits at an estimated cost of \$100 each with enough money left over for facemasks and other protective equipment to offset the shortage being experienced by many hospitals. It's time to refocus our national priorities from creating threats to preventing and treating them. By redirecting money slated to be spent on nuclear weapons, we can take care of those most impacted by COVID-19 now.

Let's call our Members of Congress and demand that funding for nuclear weapons be shifted to support the health needs of those impacted by this pandemic, so we don't wake up one day and find ourselves in an even worse nightmare.

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**Mona Lee** has resisted Trident since the first arrival of the nuclear weapons at the base. Photo of Mona at left by Leonard Eiger. Cover photo courtesy of the US Navy.

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## Ground Zero is Planning a Full Weekend of Socially-Distanced Activities to Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Hiroshima/Nagasaki Bombings

By Michael "(Firefly) Siptroth

This year, on the 75th anniversary, we have the responsibility to grieve the US nuclear bombings of two civilian targets at the end of World War II, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. These non-military targets suffered over 200,000 immediate deaths and many more over time, plus left generations scared and terrified. US nuclear fire power is much worse now and we have a very unstable "commander in chief" with the ability to start a nuclear war any time. Trident missiles and submarines represent an illegal and immoral "first strike," destabilizing capability.

All nuclear weapons must be universally abolished, joining the UN effort; please join us at Ground Zero Center for nonviolent action Sunday August 9, from 9:00 am through noon, with nonviolent training and discernment from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Our action will occur Monday August 10, at 6:00 am at the Trident Base Gate ( Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor).

Our keynote speaker Sunday (which will be live-streamed) is Puyallup Tribal Elder Ramona Bennett. She and the Puyallup Tribe lead the effort to stop the illegal and climate destroying liquefied natural gas plant on

Tribal land in Tacoma. Ground Zero strongly support efforts to address the climate crisis, and we all know any use of nuclear weapons would exasperate climate/Earth destruction! We also acknowledge that people of color

have been and are victims of the mining, manufacturing, and use of nuclear weapons. Their manufacture robs our communities of clean air, water, land, health, housing, quality education, and culture.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, we will hold events outside, practice physical distancing, wear masks, have porta-potties, and not provide communal meals. We encourage participants to bring their own lunch and snacks for Sunday and their own breakfast Monday morning. We will provide water for washing and encourage safe distance camping. One

thing to contemplate is, if a viral infection can create this much death, suffering, and havoc; imagine what even a few nuclear bombs will do!

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**Michael (Firefly) Siptroth** serves on the Stewardship Council and the planning committee for the Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration. He can be reached at [flybill2@aol.com](mailto:flybill2@aol.com). Mack Johnson also serves on the planning committee, and he can be reached at [telemackj@gmail.com](mailto:telemackj@gmail.com).

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**The destruction of Hiroshima**, which slaughtered men, women and children indiscriminately, is a terrifying reminder of what humanity is capable of inflicting when racism and militarism join with nuclear weapons.



## Ground Zero Members Find a Way to COVIDgil for Mother's Day

By Mack Johnson

With stay-at-home orders limiting Ground Zero's typical education and action at the GZ Center for Mother's Day, some people found a way to get the message out that abolishing nukes needs our attention even during a pandemic. After the excellent webinar presented by Lily Adams of the Union of Concerned Scientists, five GZ locals made our way separately to the main gate. Our notification to security forces stated that we would not have any gathering of people, would social distance and use masks, and would not try to leaflet or risk arrest. We vigiled for an hour before the heat wave called us all back into the shade.

We carried GZ signs saying "Abolish Nuclear Weapons" and "Our Children Deserve Better", and hand-made messages stating "This Mask Won't Protect Us from Nuclear Weapons" and "De-Fund Nukes, not the Post Office!" Traffic was light but we got more waves than fingers, so to speak. One person called out to us, "I hate the Navy too!" Hmm, he got the wrong idea! We'll have to make a sign that reads, "We Hate Nukes, not the Navy". That should clear things up....

I felt a heavy sense of irony wearing a cloth mask so near to these incredibly powerful instruments of death. I found myself thinking today that if a virus can disrupt the world so much, a nuclear detonation or exchange must be infinitely worse.

It was good to see friends/activists for a brief while. Our local impact was small, but I felt we represented the whole world when we found a way to "COVIDgil."

**Mack Johnson** is a retired teacher. He serves as co-chair of the Stewardship Council.

## Bannering Spreads Disarmament Message

Rodney Brunelle

Sunny summer bannering has resumed on the NE 45th. St. I - 5 overpass. Breeze from high speed traffic down below kept us cool. Sun drenched Mt. Rainier greeted Denny Duffel, Glen Milner, Sr. Iva Gregory and Rodney Brunelle one Tuesday morning. With the exception of Monday, August 9 we plan to return on Monday mornings from 8:00 to 9:00 am for the remainder of the summer. Please join us when you can. If I know several people are coming I can bring extra banners/signs. Black Lives Matter signs are welcome.



**Rodney Brunelle** is a member of Pax Christi and serves on the Ground Zero Stewardship Council. Photo above courtesy of Glen Milner.

### "The Goodness Field" Available Now

For single paper copies of *The Goodness Field: A Guidebook for Proactive Nonviolence* by Bob Aldridge, please contact [info@gzcenter.org](mailto:info@gzcenter.org). Books, offered by Bob and Janet Aldridge as their personal contribution to Ground Zero, are provided for a suggested \$15.00 donation, which includes postage via media mail service.



## Weeks of Demonstrations for Change in Washington State, USA

Na mu myo ho ren ge kyo.

In memory of Floyd's death, with its roots in the evil of racism at the founding of the United States, Gilberto Shonin and I have participated over the past five days in three demonstrations aimed at eliminating discrimination and "realizing justice for society." These demonstrations took place in Kitsap County (population 260,000, larger than Shibuya Ward of Tokyo), across Puget Sound from the city of Seattle.

At 4:00 p.m., as many as 500 people ran out of their homes in Bremerton and gathered at the Minette Bridge, where they could see the warships up close. May 31<sup>st</sup> was the last day of the state's tough stay-at-home order; gatherings of "more than three people" were banned. But those who gathered here wore masks without exception, sat half-knee, and stood in quiet protest. Gilberto Shonin and I played our drums with people holding their own placards.

The heartbreaking messages and serious attitudes of the participants shook my heart. Brother Gilberto had tears in his eyes. It's been 17 years since I came to the U.S., and this is the first time I've seen so many people in our local area (as opposed to the big cities) go to the streets and express their intentions. This was especially moving at the height of the serious coronavirus pandemic threatening the world.

but they were here anyway. Serious yet smiling, the participants seemed to be of one mind. It's been three months since the coronavirus exploded in the United States, and people quietly elbow each other instead of hugging. Putting palms together like a Buddhist monk is now the most peaceful and safe greeting among the general public, and very popular.

ed. The number of participants swelled, and these two actions together exceeded a thousand.

On the evening of June 12, we joined another action in Kingston, a small city in Western Washington.

We were especially honored to be asked to lead this march with the drums. The same day, 60,000 people joined yet another march across the water in Seattle.

Participation of the Native American Suquamish tribal people located between the two cities stood out for me. Praying with them brought up another story of police violence I could not forget. Last year on July 3, the night before Independence Day, a young Native man who lived with the Suquamish was shot dead by a

white police officer in a crowd waiting for a fireworks display at a marina in Poulsbo. The young man's name was Stonechild Chiefstick, and his tragic and mysterious end has been the catalyst for a movement against racism in the region. Many non-indigenous people have followed the investigation and attended the trial, and have seen for themselves the barbarism and discrimination behind the police system that so many Americans are protesting.

Suquamish people, on the other hand, are proud of the legacy of their ancestor, the elder Chief Seattle, who became the namesake of the city of Seattle. The chief's visionary nonviolence and philosophy of environmental protection predated Gandhi's and later that of Greta Thunberg, today's climate change heroine. I felt the

*"It's been 17 years since I came to the U.S., and this is the first time I've seen so many people go to the streets..."*



**Stonechild Chiefstick** was killed by a white police officer one year ago in Poulsbo. The police officer faced no charges. *Photo by Megan Reid, courtesy of the Kitsap Sun.*



sympathy of the tribal people for the Black community, and the will for solidarity among all races and ethnic groups. As our teacher Fujii Guruji believed, some day when this country becomes a peaceful unity, the prayers of the indigenous people will be at the heart of it.

There is a small bridge between Bainbridge Island, where the Dojo is located, and the Suquamish Reservation. And here lies another story in the legacy of American racism. In 1942, on March 30, about four months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, all 227 Japanese Americans who lived on the island were deported by a presidential decree and sent to Manzanar, a concentration camp in the desert area of California. This forced incarceration would include all 120,000 Nikkei people across the west coast, but the first case was the Nikkei on the island. There is no day when this trauma disappears from the memory of the Nikkei, who suffered deeply in mind and body. Eventually it led to a movement for compensation and apology from the federal government, inspired by the civil rights movement led by Dr. King and others.

In 1982, compensation was won, and the steadfast movement of local Japanese Americans eventually came to fruition in a memorial on the island, which became a nationally designated historic site. It was completed on August 6, 2006, the 61st anniversary of Hiroshima Day, on the old pier of the ferry to Seattle. Descendants of the internees have named the site, "Nido to naiyoni," never again. At that ceremony, we also dedicated the odaimoku (Na mu myo ho ren ge kyo).

Since the inauguration of President Trump, who continues to encourage division and discrimination within American society, the movement to remember the passion of Japanese Americans has increased in urgency and has become more serious. For instance, Japanese Americans have opposed some of the President's policies at the borders with civil disobedience.

The U.S. government's handling of the coronavirus has exposed the political leader and the identity of Imperial America. In the United States, which continues to set world records for infections and deaths, the plague has disproportionately hit African Americans (Blacks) and indigenous peoples (Native Americans) who have suffered deprivation throughout U.S. history. Now, for example, 40 percent of the 170,000 people in the Navajo Nation, the largest indigenous settlement, have few health care facilities, no electricity and a water supply insufficient to maintain health given the threat of the virus. Their valuable groundwater is taken by multinational ura-

nium and coal mining companies, with toxic and fatal results.

Also exposed is the fallacy of the world's strongest military establishment that the United States is so proud of, including 800 bases outside the country. Four kilometers beyond the marina in Poulsbo, where Stonechild was shot dead, there are 2,000 nuclear warheads, abutting the site for the new peace pagoda. It has been said for a long time that the coronavirus has spread among the local navy, but even though the military can hide unwanted facts, there is no power anywhere in the world to deter invisible viruses.

Peaceful demonstrations continue every day in Seattle. On many days, I hear that there are 10,000 people

demonstrating to complain about police violence, with some participation by police officers. The President's attempt to suppress dissent with the federal army was severely condemned by the precise and sharp tongue-in-cheek comment of former Defense Secretary Mattis, who was then nicknamed a "mad dog."

I know the family origins of Brother Gilberto, who plays the drums with me. He was born in Cuba and grew up in public housing in New York with ancestors in Nigeria, Spain and the Caribbean. The majority of his life has been accompanied by anger against racism. What impresses Brother Gilberto the most in this time is the participation of such a large number of local white youth. I have been impressed too. There is still hope in this country. I felt that hope as I prayed during the recent demonstrations. Since discrimination has been born and maintained from the very beginning and structure of this country, it will not change without the participation of whites who have overwhelming "vested rights" in the political system, the structure of society and its underlying vision.

One way to transform that vision is to adopt the Buddhist way. The Buddhist path can support other conscientious religions and teachings in these times. In any case, expectations are high here for the younger generation. And I think the broader population, including those of us who are Buddhists from Asia, are helping to lead it. It is easy to experience and appreciate diversity in the United States. I think it's fun, rich, and the only way to peaceful coexistence. *Gassho.*

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**Senji Kanaeda Shonin** serves on the Stewardship Council, and has led and participated in Peace Walks around the world. He originally wrote this article in early June for "Tenku," the monthly magazine of the Buddhist order Nipponzan Myohoji.



**Thousands** braved the pandemic to take to the streets in Seattle.  
*Photo courtesy of the AP.*

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# Peace Fleet 2020—Without the Navy!

By Glen Milner

Peace Fleet demonstrators will gather at noon on Wednesday, July 29, near Pier 66 on the Seattle waterfront. Peace demonstrators will follow social distancing guidelines and hold a short vigil for peace on Elliott Bay to protest against the normalcy of modern war. This is the 19th year for this event.

Bell Harbor Marina will be open for kayaks and for mooring vessels.

On May 20, the Seafair organization announced the cancellation of all major events, including the Blue Angels for 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic in the Puget Sound region. Two weeks later, on June 4, the U.S. Navy and Seafair announced the cancellation of Fleet Week.

Ground Zero activist and long-time Peace Fleet sailor Mary Gleysteen stated, *"It is good to see the U.S. Navy and Seafair follow scientific guidelines for public health during the coronavirus pandemic. Hopefully, our government will soon also realize that war is a public safety and public health issue and cancel all public displays of war and work for disarmament. It is also a scientific fact that our Earth cannot sustain more preparations for war, war, and destruction."*

Navy League Seattle announced that the 2020 Seattle Fleet Week will be *"an all-virtual event"* with *"week-long programming via social media, including video, imagery, and engagements"* instead of physical, in-person events.

Peace Fleet sailor Glen Milner stated, *"A virtual U.S. Navy Fleet Week seems like a much better idea. It will be a lot less costly for taxpayers and will result in a lot less carbon emissions put into the atmosphere."*

This year will be the second time the Navy's Fleet Week has been canceled in the past eight years. In 2013, the event was canceled due to budget sequestration as a result of the Budget Control Act of 2011. In 2013, over 20 Peace Fleet participants joined without the Navy, on the shore and in Elliott Bay, for peace.



**Peace Fleet Sailor Myra Leslie** displayed her rainbow "pace" flag at the 2013 Peace Fleet. *Photo by Karol Milner.*

For more details, please contact Mary Gleysteen at [marygleysteen@gmail.com](mailto:marygleysteen@gmail.com); Rodney Brunelle at [rodney.brunelle@gmail.com](mailto:rodney.brunelle@gmail.com); or Glen Milner at [gk\\_milner@comcast.net](mailto:gk_milner@comcast.net).

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**Glen Milner** serves on the Stewardship Council and works with the Media and Outreach Committee.

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## Ground Zero Hosts its First-Ever Webinar for Mother's Day

By Elizabeth Murray

The Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action hosted its first-ever webinar to mark this year's Mothers Day event on May 9th — an innovation prompted by the coronavirus pandemic, which has compelled many to "shelter in place" or limit their travel. Forty-one participants logged in from their various remote locations to take part in an interactive presentation delivered by keynote speaker Lilly Adams entitled "Nuclear Voices: Centering Justice in the Fight for Nuclear Abolition."

Adams, a nuclear weapons policy expert with the Union of Concerned Scientists who previously worked as a consultant on nuclear issues with the Seattle-based Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR), focused on the human costs borne by the "nuclear frontline communities" — her term for the frequently poor, rural, indigenous and/or non-Caucasian

peoples who have suffered immense, often irreparable harm as a result of the production, testing and deployment of nuclear weapons, and whose stories and experiences have been largely kept away from the public eye, even as they and their families continue to bear extremely negative health impacts from their exposure to nuclear radiation.

Examples of these disenfranchised individuals include the uranium miners of the Navaho nation, who continue to suffer a legacy of ill health from their mining work and radiation still emanating from the 500 abandoned uranium mines that scar their land; the rural Americans who lived downwind of the nuclear testing at Alamogordo's Trinity site and in Nevada; the Hanford "downwinders," some of whom attended this webinar;

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**Mother's Day Webinar... continued on page 7**

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# Pacific Northwest Peace Walk for a Nuclear-Free World and Racial Justice 2020

By Senji Kanaeda Shonin

In 2011, after the devastating nuclear accident in Fukushima, Japan, I created two kinds of world maps. It was before the peace march. One map showed the world's nuclear power plants and the other are displayed nuclear test sites and nuclear powers (bombs). Then, a certain fact was noticed. With the exception of nuclear powers (bombs) belonging to Asia, such as North Korea, China, and India, many of the nuclear test sites by Western countries were almost limited to non-white areas.

It is often pointed out that racism (colonialism) is targeted at Japanese people, including the atomic bomb survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is impossible to bring hypothesis into history, but if we were Europeans, would America have dropped a nuclear bomb? If the Marshall Islanders were like that, if Polynesians on Tahiti were like that, would a nuclear test in the atmosphere be conducted there?

The answer is no. Every spring, when a peace march takes place toward the Nevada nuclear test site, the organizers (mainly Las Vegas Catholic workers) have asked the Elders of the Western Shoshoni tribe to lead the march. The reason is it is stolen land whose ownership is vague in the law even now. They are the people who know the exact suffering as downwinders.

The Black Lives Matter movement began in cities in the Midwest and is spreading around the world. In a sense, the coronavirus disaster pulled the trigger. I know that there are a lot of young white people in this movement. I feel great hope that they are not hesitant to participate.

For me, as a Japanese person, the abolition of nuclear weapons and the abolition of racism are the same, only one side does not realize it independently. The Mar-

shall Islanders, French Polynesian nuclear victims and Japanese fishermen who were victims of the hydrogen bomb should one day be compensated and receive an apology. They are the same human. And it should never happen again.

This year, I would like to walk for a world without nuclear weapons and a world without racism, while paying attention to the pandemic. The walk will just be a few days. However, I would like to do what I can do again in a familiar place with my Ground Zero friends.

Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo and gassho (palms together).

## Schedule

Wednesday, Aug. 5: start at the Tacoma Catholic Workers, 1415 G. St. Tacoma, at 9:00 am.

Thursday, Aug. 6: start at Lake Forest Park at 11:00 am and walk to Green Lake, Seattle (join the Lantern Ceremony if it is happening).

Friday, Aug. 7, or Saturday, Aug. 8: start at Chief Seattle's Grave, Suquamish or Fish Park Poulsbo at 9:00 am and walk to Ground Zero Center.

If you have any questions, or need more information, please contact Rev. Senji Kanaeda, Nipponzan Myohoji Bainbridge Island Dojo, 6154 Lynwood Ctr. Rd. NE Bainbridge Island, 98110, or call either 206-780-6739 or 206-724-7632 (cell.)

Additionally, Peace Pagoda construction restarted at Ground Zero at the end of June. We welcome any supporters for it.

**Senji Kanaeda Shonin** serves on the Stewardship Council, and has led and participated in Peace Walks around the world.

## Mother's Day Webinar... continued from page 6



**Lilly Adams.** Photo courtesy of [www.psr.org](http://www.psr.org).

the Marshalese people, whose islands were rendered uninhabitable by US nuclear testing and who were forced to migrate to the US mainland; the sailors and other US 'atomic veterans' who were sickened after being in direct proximity to those islands during or following the 67 nuclear blasts; and the *Hibakusha*, the remaining Japanese sur-

vivors of the nuclear bombs dropped on their hometowns of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, whose children and grandchildren continue to suffer cancers, birth defects, and other serious illnesses directly related to the nuclear blasts.

A native Washingtonian who grew up in Shoreline just north of Seattle and majored in Environmental Studies degree at UC-Berkeley, Adams explained how own personal story is bound up with the nuclear issue. She confessed to initially knowing little to nothing about the presence of nuclear weapons in Washington state prior to beginning her job with WPSR. As she began learning more about Washington's major role in nuclear weapons production and storage at Hanford and Bangor, she

**Mother's Day Webinar... continued on page 9**



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# Blessed Are The Humble, For They Shall Inherit The Earth (Matthew 5:5)

By Phil J. Davis

Stop the machines,  
my dear, pathetic, human friends,  
before it's too late  
to save our species.

Worse than ants  
trapped in a long line  
carrying leaves to a dark cave  
we sit in our cars  
outside Naval Submarine Base Bangor  
waiting our turns  
to carry nuclear weapons  
on our human backs  
down to the bottom of the sea.  
Ready to light a fuse  
from a deep ocean source  
that sends mushroom clouds across the sky  
and destroys us all.

Climb down from your bench  
your honor, the judge  
join the innocent wisdom  
that stops this madness  
before nuclear fires destroy our cities  
and only insects survive the next morning to climb  
from the ashes and give birth to  
their mutant, six-leg children, their children not ours,  
and insects become the superior, smarter species,  
not us the foolish humans.

Sober up, my drunken friends,  
that Russian soldier in a different uniform  
is not your real enemy  
nor is the North Korean.  
It's the warlords who make a profit,  
the politicians who find a  
path to power stoking our fears,  
your fears, our fears, my fears,  
the same all across the globe.  
Vladimir Putin the same as Kim Jong-Un,  
 Clintons & Bushes the same as Donald Trump.  
They feed our fears and we cheer their words.  
Stop that war machine before it is too late.

Insects can adapt, they can  
chop off two legs and run on four  
in order to live longer,  
protecting other ants in the colony.  
Can you throw off your military uniform?  
Amputate your slavery – at least two legs?  
You the humans who claim intelligence,

can you stop marching off this cliff  
now on the Eve of Destruction?  
Or will it be modified grasshopper children,  
seven-legged spider offspring,  
who inherit the earth?



**Scooby, a medical alert service dog,** cares for Ground Zero member Lisa Johnson. Scooby attended the September 26, 2019 mitigation hearing and proudly wore a sign in front of Bangor for the Mothers' Day 2020 action.  
*Photo by Lisa Johnson.*

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Wake up in the  
middle of the night  
and write a poem.  
Don't listen to your paycheck  
nor the war stories  
you were told in school,  
that textbook history, I also  
heard as a child,  
justifying Hiroshima and Nagasaki as  
saving lives, savings lives, saving American lives,  
America the gentle giant, helping, helping, helping.  
Wake up in the middle of the  
night and listen to  
your heartbeat and ask  
yourself how gentle are  
the 7,000 nuclear weapons we have in our arsenal  
and how we now update, modernize, build more  
make them smaller, more accurate, easier to use,

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*Blessed are the Humble... continued on page 9*



those smaller, gentler, nuclear weapons  
that can be used to gently, hellishly bake  
whole cities in a furnace of 100,000 degrees Celsius,  
so gentle, so gentle, always saving lives.

Give me coffee at night  
and maybe I will wake up and see.  
Don't give me beer in the morning  
to feed my fears.

What will sober us up, clear our minds?  
Perhaps only a cold plunge into Puget Sound,  
a polar bear dip can  
pump the poison from our hearts.

Then on four legs  
we will splash out of the icy water,  
like loyal service dogs, shaking ourselves,  
licking each other's paws.

Only then will we have  
thrown off our hatred, our war machines,  
only when we get down on our hands and knees,  
four legs and no arms.

No nuclear arms!  
Human service dogs, amputating our ambition to be  
the smartest, the most powerful, the most destructive,  
cutting off the arms race,  
humans humbled into puppies,  
panting, barking, canine creatures.  
Mankind's most loyal and best friends,  
you be our role models!

Only then,  
not so proud,  
not standing tall  
as engineers of new  
weapons of mass destruction,  
only giving up that conceit,  
that lust for supreme power and control,  
but rather  
wagging our tails in humble friendship,  
only down on four legs  
and no arms  
no nuclear arms  
can we outlive the insects.

*Phil J. Davis read this poem to the judge at his mitigation hearing last fall. "I have used logical or legal arguments before at mitigation hearings, but this time I just felt like 'howling' for America, in the spirit of Allen Ginsburg."*

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**Phil J. Davis** was cited by the Washington State Patrol for intentionally blocking traffic entering the nuclear weapons base during a vigil in 2019.

grew frustrated: "How could I NOT have known about nukes? How could I have lived most of my life just 20 miles from 1,000 nuclear weapons, never knowing it?"

Adams said that her family members - some of whom had resided in the Tri-Cities area (Hanford-Kennewick-Pasco) - had been unaware that they were living adjacent to a nuclear site that was "the most contaminated place in the Western hemisphere." The lack of publicly available information about nuclear weapons is evidence, she said of a deliberate and clearly successful government strategy of downplaying the issue. Noting that she used to spend her summers near a Spokane Indian reservation where uranium mining had taken place (unbeknownst to her), she concluded: "So I felt that something had been hidden from me."

As she struggled to come to grips with the "devastation" caused by nuclear radiation to so many people, the subject "settled into my bones" and "became part of who I really was." Now, she said, "I can't turn away from it."

After receiving a grant from the Ploughshares Fund, Adams traveled to many "frontline" communities impacted by nuclear radiation to hear and record their stories. She related the story of a uranium worker from New Mexico named Linda, who had crafted a necklace from yellowcake uranium brought home by her uncle as a gift, not having received any information from the mine about its toxicity. Linda continued to work in the mine during her two pregnancies, having been reassured by the mine owners that it was safe to do so. Both her children were born with severe birth defects, while Linda herself suffers from a host of radiation-related ailments including atrophying bones, pulmonary fibrosis, cancerous tumors, bleeding skin and deteriorating eyesight.

Adams makes the compelling argument that by relating these personal accounts that document the unmistakable extent of suffering caused by the nuclear industry, the bubble of public ignorance and apathy around the nuclear issue can be more easily pierced, raising awareness and motivating meaningful action. She said that understanding the human costs of producing nuclear armaments in a more personal way can reach people more effectively than citing abstract statistics about mass casualties.

Her website, Nuclear Voices, hosts a database and other resources for working with nuclear frontline communities: [www.nuclear-voices.org](http://www.nuclear-voices.org).

Interested readers can watch the full video recording of the Adams' Ground Zero Mothers Day keynote presentation from the Ground Zero website, where it has been posted on the main page.

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**Elizabeth Murray** serves as Member-in-Residence for Ground Zero. She is also a member of Veterans Intelligence Professionals for Sanity.

# Seattle-Area Billboards Inform Citizens of Backyard Nuclear Weapons Stockpile on the 75<sup>th</sup> Remembrance of the Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

By Glen Milner

On July 13, and continuing for four weeks, four billboards will display the following paid advertisement: *Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor... Base with largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons in the U.S., Remembering the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Accept Responsibility!* Included in the advertisement is a map showing the proximity of Seattle to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, homeport for eight of the Navy's 14 Trident nuclear-powered submarines, and a U.S. Navy photo of the Trident submarine, USS Nebraska, taken on June 2, 2017 near Elliott Bay.

The ad refers to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, on August 6 and August 9, 1945, 75 years ago. It is estimated that more than [210,000 people died](#) from the two atomic bombs by the end of 1945 — about 140,000 in Hiroshima and 74,000 in Nagasaki. Many more were sickened with [cancer and chronic diseases](#). The ad seeks to inform citizens in the Puget Sound region of our relationship to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor with the largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons in the U.S.

**"Hunthausen didn't merely call for a lukewarm set of reforms. He called for immediate nuclear disarmament and massive civil disobedience."**

The statement, *Accept Responsibility*, is a plea for citizens of Puget Sound to accept their role and responsibility — as taxpayers, as members of a democratic society, and as neighbors to the Trident nuclear submarine base in Hood Canal — to work to prevent the use of nuclear weapons.

Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor is homeport to the largest concentration of deployed nuclear warheads in the U.S. The nuclear warheads are deployed on Trident [D-5 missiles](#) on [SSBN submarines](#) and are stored in an underground [nuclear weapons storage facility](#) on the base.

There are eight Trident SSBN submarines deployed at [Bangor](#). Six Trident SSBN submarines are deployed on the East Coast at Kings Bay, Georgia.

One Trident submarine carries the destructive force of over 1,200 Hiroshima bombs (the Hiroshima bomb was 15 kilotons).

Each Trident submarine was originally equipped for 24 Trident missiles. In 2015-2017 four missile tubes were deactivated on each submarine as a result of the New START Treaty. Currently, each Trident submarine deploys with 20 D-5 missiles and about 90 nuclear warheads (an average of 4-5 warheads per missile). The warheads are either the W76-1 90-kiloton or W88 455-kiloton warheads.

The Navy in early 2020 started deploying the

new [W76-2](#) low-yield warhead (approximately eight kilotons) on select ballistic submarine missiles at Bangor (following initial deployment in the Atlantic in December 2019). The warhead was deployed to deter Russian first use of tactical nuclear weapons, dangerously creating a [lower threshold](#) for the use of U.S. strategic nuclear weapons.

Any use of [nuclear weapons](#) against another nuclear weapon state would likely elicit a response with nuclear weapons, causing overwhelming death and destruction. Besides the [direct effects](#) on the adversaries, the associated radioactive fallout would affect people in other nations. The global human and economic impacts would be far beyond imagination, and orders of magnitude beyond the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

[Hans M. Kristensen](#) is the expert source for the statement, *"Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor... with largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons in the U.S."* (See cited source material [here](#) and [here](#).) Mr. Kristensen is director of the [Nuclear Information Project](#) at the [Federation of American Scientists](#) where he provides the public with analysis and background information about the status of nuclear forces and the role of nuclear weapons.

The billboards are an effort by [Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action](#), a grass roots organization in Poulsbo, Washington, to reawaken public awareness of the dangers of nuclear weapons in the Puget Sound region.

## Civic responsibility and nuclear weapons

Our proximity to the largest number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons puts us near a dangerous local and international threat. When citizens become aware of their role in the prospect of nuclear war, or the risk of a nuclear accident, the issue is no longer an abstraction. Our proximity to Bangor demands a deeper response.

Citizens in a democracy also have responsibilities — which includes choosing our leaders and staying informed about what our government is doing. The submarine base at Bangor is 20 miles from downtown Seattle, yet only a small percentage of citizens in our region know that Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor exists.

Citizens of Washington State consistently elect governmental officials who support nuclear weapons in Washington State. In the 1970s, Senator Henry Jackson convinced the Pentagon to locate the Trident submarine base on the Hood Canal, while Senator Warren Magnuson obtained funding for roads and other impacts caused by the Trident base. The only Trident submarine

**Seattle-Area Billboards... continued on page 11**

to be named after a person (and our former Washington State Senator) is the [USS Henry M. Jackson](#) (SSBN-730), homeported at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor.

In 2012, Washington State established the [Washington Military Alliance](#) (WMA), strongly promoted by both Governors Gregoire and Inslee. The WMA, Department of Defense, and other governmental agencies work to strengthen the role of [Washington State](#) as a "...[Power Projection Platform](#) (Strategic Ports, Rail, Roads, and Airports) [with] the complementary air, land, and sea units with which to accomplish the mission." Also see "[power projection](#)."

Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor and the Trident submarine system have evolved since the first Trident submarine arrived in August 1982. The [base has upgraded](#) to a much larger D-5 missile with a larger W88 (455 kiloton) warhead, with ongoing modernization of missile guidance and control systems.

### The issues

\* [The U.S. is spending more on nuclear weapons](#) programs than during the height of the Cold War.

\* The U.S. currently plans to spend an estimated [\\$1.7 trillion](#) over 30 years for rebuilding the nation's nuclear facilities and modernizing nuclear weapons.

\* The New York Times reported that the U. S., Russia and [China](#) are aggressively pursuing a new generation of smaller and less destructive nuclear weapons. The buildups threaten to revive a [Cold War-era arms race](#) and unsettle the balance of power among nations.

\* The U.S. Navy states that [SSBN](#) submarines on patrol provide the U.S. with its "most survivable and enduring nuclear strike capability." However, SSBNs in port and nuclear warheads stored at SWFPAC are likely a first target in a nuclear war. Google [imagery](#) from 2018 shows three SSBN submarines on the Hood Canal water-front.

\* An accident involving nuclear weapons occurred on [November 2003](#) when a ladder penetrated a nuclear nosecone during a routine missile offloading at the Explosives Handling Wharf at Bangor. All missile-handling operations at SWFPAC were stopped for nine weeks until Bangor could be recertified for handling nuclear weapons. [Three top commanders](#) were fired, but the public was never informed until information was leaked to the media in March 2004.

\* Public responses from governmental officials to the 2003 missile accident were generally in the form of [surprise](#) and [disappointment](#).

\* Due to ongoing modernization and maintenance programs for warheads at Bangor, [nuclear war-heads](#) are routinely shipped in unmarked trucks between the Department of Energy Pantex Plant near Amarillo,

Texas and the Bangor base. Unlike the Navy at Bangor, the [DOE](#) actively promotes emergency preparedness.

### The billboard ads

The four billboard ads will be displayed from July 13 through August 9 and measure 10 ft. 6 in. tall by 22 ft. 9 in. in length. The billboards are near the following locations:



**You can't miss it.** The billboard's design highlights the close proximity of Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor to the population of Seattle.

- \* Aurora Ave. N. and N 41<sup>st</sup>
- \* 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. S. and S. Dawson
- \* Denny Way and Taylor Ave. N.
- \* Rainier Ave. S. and S. Walker St.

The photo of the submarine in the ad is from a U.S. Navy DVIDS website, at <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/3446233/uss-nebraska-ssbn-739-departs-psns-imf-sea-trials>. The caption for the photo states:

170602-N-TA321-501 PUGET SOUND, Wash. (June 02, 2017) The Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine USS Nebraska (SSBN 739) passes by Seattle during sea trials after completing an extended major maintenance period, to include an engineered refueling overhaul at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility. (U.S. Navy photo by Culinary Specialist Seaman Joseph W. Weiser/Released)

### Nuclear weapons and resistance

On May 27, 2016, [President Obama](#) spoke in Hiroshima and called for an end to nuclear weapons. He said that the nuclear powers "...must have the courage to escape the logic of fear, and pursue a world without them." Obama added, "We must change our mindset about war itself."

**Glen Milner** leads legal struggles on behalf of Ground Zero. He lives in Lake Forest Park.



# GROUND ZERO

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*“Never, ever be afraid to  
make some noise and get in  
good trouble, necessary trouble.”*

*— Rep. John Lewis*

## Ground Zero Members Participate in Black Lives Matter Protests

By Alice Zillah

A number of Ground Zero members have been regularly attending the protests and demonstrations calling for an end to police brutality against Black Americans, and for equality more broadly. Some Ground Zero activists have helped to organize the protests in Poulsbo and Bremerton.

The photo at left appeared in the Kitsap Sun on May 31. Senji Kanaeda Shonin and Gilberto Perez Shonin were two of over 400 people on Bremerton's Manette Bridge, which the paper noted was "lined end-to-end" with people calling for justice.

The rapid pace of the protest movement, and the growing support of many previously unaware white Americans, provides a beacon of hope for the anti-nuclear movement. We hope it does not take a tragedy like the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others, to awaken people to the dire menace of nuclear weapons.



*Alice Zillah edits the Ground Zero newsletter. She lives in Olympia.*