

Ground Zero

October 2021

Volume 26 Issue 4



Marshallese Survivors Call for Justice

By Rev. Senji Kanaeda

On August 7, 2021, the day after the Hiroshima Day Lantern Ceremony in Seattle, special visitors were received at the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. These special visitors were 25 people from the Marshall Islands.

The United States military conducted 67 tests of nuclear and hydrogen bombs in the Marshall Islands in the South Pacific over a period of 12 years, beginning immediately after the atomic bomb was dropped in Nagasaki. The hydrogen bomb (named "Bravo") detonated on the Bikini Atoll on March 1, 1954, and also exposed around 1,000 Japanese fishing boats. It is estimated that the destructive force of this bomb was 1,000 times greater than that of the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

The 25 Marshallese people marched carrying a banner that read: "Kijejeto". In Marshallese, "kijejeto"

means reaching the limit of their endurance. The annual Pacific Northwest peace marchers, carrying a Buddhist flag, followed them with chanting and drumming. All of them were welcomed to Ground Zero, where a peace pagoda is being built. It was a deeply emotional moment for those of us who have had a small exchange with the Marshallese during the annual peace march in Salem, Oregon.

The 25 visitors were members of the Marshallese Women's Association, which was formed to revive communities that suffer from nuclear damage and poverty, and to ensure that each one of them had access to appropriate medical health, education, and work.

Their slogan, "Don't ever whisper," is the title of a

Marshallese... continued on page 2

2013 book about the life of the first Marshallese woman to earn a master's degree. Her name was Darlene Keju; she was one of the first Marshallese people to speak out strongly about the nuclear damage to the Marshall Islands, particularly to women and children, and to the world. Keju called her fellow citizens "champions of the atomic bomb survivors." She died of cancer in 1996.

Rachel Hoffman, who Ground Zero invited as a keynote speaker, is a 29-year-old Marshallese woman and elementary school teacher in Everett, born in Seattle. Her grandmother developed thyroid cancer after being exposed to the Bikini H-bomb and came to the United States for medical treatment, beginning a long association with the US.

The first thing Rachel mentioned in her speech was a picture of a Nagasaki boy that she saw for the first time at Ground Zero on this day. The photograph of "A boy standing at the cremation site" with his sibling's body on his back has become known to the world by a card issued by Pope Francis with the words "the fruit of war." In that moment as Rachel spoke, the truth was shared by a single photograph, and the hearts of the Marshallese and the Japanese were instantly coupled.

"When nuclear tests were being conducted, we were regarded as animals or as people who have no words, personalities, or cultures, whose skin was dark and looks ugly; as guinea pigs, so to speak," said Rachel. "In the Marshalls, they always are short of materials. Natural materials and artifacts destroyed by the nuclear tests were needed to make homes. The health of families was contaminated by radioactivity without their knowing it, and eventually they died one after another from cancer."

The average life expectancy of Marshall Islanders is 13 years shorter than that of the average American, and there is a 19-year gap compared to the world's longest-lived Japanese.

"After the experiment, scientists came regularly from the U.S. to conduct a program to examine our health, and there was no concept of treatment or compensation in it." Rachel spoke with a calm tone of voice, but the content of what she said was painful and intense. Secret documents and records from the U.S. nuclear test era deliberately concealed the gruesome true story behind the conduct of the test.

Rachel was followed by Lorris Edimon, a high school student who talked of water shortages caused by

climate change and the crisis of submerging coral islands to express her concerns about the longevity of the islands and culture. Afterwards, Brenda Kelek, a Marshallese Community Health Navigator, who was born and raised

on Ebeye Island, which has been called the "slum of the Pacific Ocean," and who worked at the U.S. military base on Kwajalein, talked about the significant pay gap between Marshallese and U.S. citizens and her experiences of harsh racism. Dr. Robin Narruhn, the Vice President of the Women's Association, who teaches nursing at Seattle University, emphasized that poverty, forced ignorance and silence of the Marshallese were all related to imperialism, colonialism and the nuclear tests.

None of the women advocated hate of a particular person or group under any circumstances, and they did not forget their gratitude for the Ground Zero Center, which provided this opportunity to speak.

Caroline, a Ground Zero member and white woman who participated in a six-day peace march and walked through Seattle with her 14-year-old granddaughter the day before, asked Rachel the last question: "How can we American white people build a favorable solidarity relationship with you and be useful?"

This was Rachel's answer: "Since the 1980s, we have been immigrants (driven from radioactively contaminated islands) and newcomers who do not know right from left, and this includes the Marshallese Women's Association. We need guidance from experienced people to directly reach out to politicians (lobbying); to gain access to children's education and health care; and to earn a stable income. Above all, I think it's a step forward that we got the opportunity to speak here, and I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude."

On the morning of July 25, when the peace marchers started walking in Salem, we met Antonio Eliu, who was a Senator from Ujae atoll in the Parliament of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and also a member of the Cabinet.

The graveyard at Chemawa Indian School was the starting point of the peace walk. In 2016, the unburied bodies of 220 Indian students were located in the graveyard by Native anthropologist Marsha Small; she thinks that probably there were many more that she was not able to find. Indian children were forcibly placed in boarding



Champions of atomic bomb survivors. Marshallese women and children gathered at Ground Zero and shared their stories and pain. *Photo by Mohan Trivedi.*

schools, where they were forbidden to speak their language or practice their culture. Many died anonymously; other suffered years of physical and sexual abuse. The march ended at an African American church on the outskirts of town, and we were warmly greeted by Pastor Marilyn Williams. Mark Babson, a long-time buddy who worked as the organizer at that evening's gathering of five races and ethnicities, is white, lived in six countries outside the US, and speaks four languages fluently. Seven years ago, our relationship with the Marshallese began with a question from Mark, a Quaker: "There are 3,000 Marshallese people in Salem who are suffering so much from the aftereffects of the nuclear tests. Would you like to meet some of them?"

The Marshallese suggest that there is a structure of deeply rooted imperialism and racism that underlie nuclear weapons, which will continue to exist until these deeper roots are removed or healed. Most of the nuclear victims are people of color who are not native speakers of the European languages that conquered the world, such as English and French, and until recently their suffering has often been overlooked and ignored. Britain defiled the Aboriginal lands of Australia, and France also defiled people and lands in Algeria and Polynesia.

On the morning of August 9, after all the events, a Gujarati person, who teaches at the University of California San Diego, visited Ground Zero and the temple with

his wife and daughter. Mr. Mohan Turivedi's father is said to be a distant relative of Gandhi; later I learned that his father had received a letter from the Mahatma. Mohan was from Warda, where our teacher Fujii Guruji met with Mahatma, and I guided his family to the Japanese American detention memorial and our temple in Bainbridge Island after showing them pagoda under construction.

The family's visit once again made me think about the reason for the existence of the Ground Zero Center. It is an American grassroots organization that develops Gandhi's ideas and actions of non-violence and civil disobedience right next to the world's largest nuclear arsenal. Of course, the family's homeland, India, is the country of Buddha, who preaches peace and the Buddha's relics are going to be enshrined here soon. This summer, many events were reduced and canceled, however, we were still able to host a landmark visit by the people of the Marshall Islands during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gassho (palms together).

Rev. Senji Kanaeda has led peace walks around the world, and serves on the Ground Zero Stewardship Council. *The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is a country with a population of about 80,000, mostly in eastern Micronesia in the South Pacific. Before W.W.II, it was under Japanese rule and after the war American rule. Major diplomatic relations are with the United States, which holds the national defense right. The American military base and missile center on Kwajalein atoll operates in exchange for allowing Marshallese citizens to live and work in the US, according to the 1986 Compact of Free Association (COFA) treaty. The RMI became independent in 1979.*

Annual Meeting Coming Up!

By Glen Milner

The annual Ground Zero membership meeting is when we decide the future of Ground Zero. It is a time for reflection and renewal, and for new proposals for peace and justice. Please consider serving on a committee or on one of the positions listed below.

This year the meeting will take place at Ground Zero on Saturday, November 6, at 1:00. We'll wrap up by 4:00. We'll also have a Zoom connection available for folks who can't be there in person. Please email info@gzcenter.org for the Zoom invitation.

All positions on the Stewardship Council, including Secretary, Treasurer, Chairperson and committee positions will be chosen or renewed at the annual meeting for the next year. Committees include house and grounds, communication/outreach, website, leafleting, finance/budget, and media. There is currently one ad hoc committee—regarding the Peace Pagoda at Ground Zero. There are also several "at large" positions on the Council.

The purpose of the Stewardship Council and committee positions is to divide the responsibilities and work of Ground Zero into manageable sections. We all help one another in the process. The Council meets once a month, currently in person with a Zoom connection for

those who wish to participate online. All meetings are open to all members.

It was decided in November 2002 that decisions of the Stewardship Council and committees would be by consensus and in accord with the Mission Statement, which reads, "*Founded in 1977, Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action offers the opportunity to explore the meaning and practice of nonviolence from a perspective of deep spiritual reflection, providing a means for witnessing to and resisting all nuclear weapons, especially Trident. We seek to go to the root of violence and injustice in our world and experience the transforming power of love through nonviolent direct action.*"

Ground Zero is part of a larger peace community in the Pacific Northwest that transcends geographic boundaries, gender, race and time. We invite all to come and share your ideas for a peaceful and larger world community and to help continue our resistance to the Trident nuclear weapons system.

Please join us.

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

Ground Zero's Hiroshima and Nagasaki Commemoration: A Call to Action

By Leonard Eiger

Members of Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action held this year's remembrance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki under the theme "A Call to Action, Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki From Testing to Trident to Treaty." A major focus of the weekend was the plight of the people of the Marshall Islands, who continue to bear the burden of U.S. nuclear testing of 67 thermonuclear weapons on their islands between 1946 and 1958.

Rachel Hoffman, secretary of The Marshallese Women's Association, gave the keynote address "Kijejeto (Persevere): The Marshallese Will Not Whimper." Her talk focused on the barriers to quality of life faced by her displaced community, resulting directly from nuclear testing, historical trauma and colonization. She spoke of how the U.S. Government saw the Marshallese as "simply not worthy of being informed that one of our islands would be wiped off the face of the earth, poisoning tens of thousands of Marshallese and their future generations, and then being tested like animals to inform the rest of the world of how nuclear weapons affect the body." The U.S. considered the Marshallese and their lands to be expendable commodities in its Cold War nuclear contest with the (then) Soviet Union.



Refusing to be complicit. Activists gathered early in the morning on the anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki and closed the main entrance to the Trident base for several minutes. *Photo by Chris Rogers.*

The Marshallese people – their land and waters poisoned by long-lasting radioisotopes produced by so many nuclear tests – struggle to maintain their identity, and suffer poor health outcomes due to the barriers to healthcare here in the U.S. Robin Narruhn, PhD, who is researching barriers to healthcare for the Marshallese, spoke to this issue: "In Spokane, where the Marshallese represent only 1 percent of the population, they represent 30 percent of the COVID cases." She cited "racism and colonialization" as principal factors behind the discrimination

against the Marshallese in terms of access to adequate healthcare.

Videos of the Marshallese speakers, along with other videos shown during the weekend, are available at the Ground Zero website.

The weekend culminated with a traditional vigil and nonviolent direct action on August 9th. 31 people were present for the demonstration against Trident nuclear weapons at the Bangor submarine base Main Gate during morning rush-hour traffic.

At around 7:15 AM, after "peacekeepers" entered the roadway and safely stopped traffic, eight demonstrators set themselves and their banners on the roadway blocking entry into the Main Gate.

Mack Johnson, Silverdale; George Rodkey, Tacoma; and Denny Duffell, Seattle carried a banner reading "Hiroshima Nagasaki Never Again." Michael Siptroth, Belfair, Mark Sisk, Seattle; and Gilberto Perez, Bainbridge Island carried a banner reading "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons/ Nuclear Weapons are Illegal/ Get them out of Kitsap County." Sean Foley, Belfair; and James Manista, Olympia held a banner reading "Nuclear Weapons are: Immoral to use, Immoral to have, immoral to make."

Traffic attempting to enter the Main Gate was stopped for almost seven minutes. All eight demonstrators were then escorted from the roadway by Washington State Patrol officers and cited with RCW 46.61.250, Pedestrians on roadways.

Although they were in the roadway for a relatively short time, traffic remained backed up for more than 30 minutes with cars crawling along the vigil line where "We Can All Live without Trident" banner and "No More Genocide in Our Name" streamer were held by supporters. Members of the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Temple on Bainbridge Island, who led this year's Interfaith Peace Walk that ended at Ground Zero, drummed and chanted, marking the solemn occasion commemorating the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. Those cited by WSP gave copies of the leaflet "From Trident to Testing to Treaty: The Planet Needs You" to military police and WSP officers.

Ground Zero also ran paid public service announcements (PSAs) in the print editions of the Kitsap Sun newspaper in July and August. On August 6th a PSA was published "Remembering the Atomic Bomb Victims of Hiroshima, Japan." A subsequent PSA was run on August 9th "Remembering the Atomic Bomb Victims of Nagasaki, Japan." The PSA, "An Appeal to Navy Personnel", run on July 25th and August 15th, was addressed to

A Call to Action... continued on page 5

“Brothers and Sisters in the Navy” and urged them to “Refuse to engage in nuclear annihilation!” All are posted at the Ground Zero website.

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive, inhumane, and indiscriminate weapons ever created. They are unlike any other weapons in the scale of the devastation they cause and with their uniquely damaging radioactive fallout. A single nuclear bomb detonated over a large city could kill millions of people. The use of dozens or hundreds of nuclear bombs would disrupt the global climate, causing widespread famine. A full-scale nuclear war between the US and Russia would result in death and devas-

tation that is almost beyond human comprehension.

Remembering the atomic bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the countless victims of nuclear production and testing, is essential to preventing the use of nuclear weapons from happening again. It is, in fact, a call to action to abolish nuclear weapons, which is the only way to prevent the unthinkable!

Leonard Eiger chairs the Communication and Outreach Committee, and sends out press releases and information on behalf of Ground Zero.

Messaging Motorists — Banners Up!

By Rodney Brunelle

For the fourth straight summer Ground Zero “banneristas” and friends representing Pax Christi, Veterans for Peace, 350 Seattle, and Lake Forest Park for Peace brought our ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS banners and signs to the NE 45th Street and I-5 overpass in Seattle. Thousands of motorists joyfully greeted us and our message, especially during the afternoon sessions, which we added this September. To coincide with Campaign Nonviolence Action Week we bannered for an hour every day from September 21st (International Day for Peace) through September 25th, the day before the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Responses from motorists were overwhelmingly positive. As Glen Milner observed, “It was a celebratory type of occasion, and by their reactions, if those on the freeway could vote up or down – there would be no nuclear weapons.”

Ground Zero members decided to extend banner to additional locations this summer. Occasional actions took place in Tacoma and Kitsap County. Also, friends in Earth Care Not Warfare got wind of our banner and decided to join with us, standing once a week on an overpass on Rainier Ave. South, across from Franklin High School, Seattle.

A highlight of this summer was our contact with KUOW reporter Gracie Todd. Having seen one of our billboards highlighting the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Ms. Todd contacted Leonard Eiger, whom she interviewed, and then visited us on the overpass where she also did an extensive interview with Mary Hanson.

KUOW aired two of her short pieces on Friday, September 24th. In Ms. Todd’s report she said in part, “While some argue that nuclear weapons are necessary, surveys have shown a majority of Americans disagree, and support decreasing or eliminating the nation’s stock-

piles. The threat is close to home. One of the world’s largest concentrations of nuclear weapons sits just miles away across the Puget Sound at Kitsap Bangor Submarine Base. And experts say that in the case of a nuclear war, Seattle would be a likely target.”



You can’t miss them. The summer bannering campaign reaches thousands of motorists. *Photo by Glen Milner.*

Ms. Todd indicated that she is already doing research on a much longer, in-depth story about Washington State’s long connection to nuclear weapons.

We will be back with banners next summer for our weekly statement for peace.

Rodney Brunelle is a member of Pax Christi and serves on the Ground Zero Stewardship Council. He leads the Billboards and Bus Ads Campaigns.

Billboards Challenge Washington State's Support of Nuclear Weapons

By Leonard Eiger

Beginning August 30th, and continuing for four weeks, billboards in four Seattle locations displayed the following paid advertisement: "September 26 – INTERNATIONAL DAY to ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS!" Included in the advertisement was a map showing the proximity of Seattle to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, homeport for eight of the Navy's 14 Trident nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, and a U.S. Navy photo of the Trident submarine, USS Nebraska, taken on June 2, 2017 near Elliott Bay. (See page 13 for picture.)

The ad refers to the United Nations International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, designated by the UN General Assembly in 2013. UN Member States, civil society organizations, academia, parliamentarians, the mass media and individuals are encouraged to commemorate and promote the International Day through enhancing public awareness and education about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination.

The ad seeks to inform citizens in the Puget Sound region of the importance of abolishing nuclear weapons and our relationship to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor with the largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons in the U.S.

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. Of course, the only way to ensure nuclear weapons are never used is global nuclear disarmament.

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.

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 include 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 consistently elect govern-

mental officials who support nuclear weapons in the 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 to be named after a person (and our former Washington State Senator) is

Billboards... continued on page 13

Caretaker Wanted!

Ground Zero is seeking a caretaker(s) of the house and surrounding grounds in exchange for rent. Caretakers pay a portion of utilities based on means. We ask for a six-month commitment with potential for longer term residency.

Situated on four beautiful wooded acres, the caretaker's apartment is a private 600 square-foot one-bedroom apartment with access to common areas including a large kitchen. The apartment is partially furnished and high-speed internet is supplied. There is garden space and existing fruit trees and berries. Partners and/or children welcome.

The caretaker's duties include lawn and house maintenance. **The most important thing is that you are a welcoming person committed to nonviolence.** To find out more about our center and our mission, visit our website at www.gzcenter.org. Please send inquiries about this position to info@gzcenter.org.



Activists testify on the dangers of Trident in District Court

By Mary Gleysteen

Mark Sisk, James Manista, Sean Foley, Michael “Firefly” Siptroth and Mack Johnson who were among those cited by Washington State Patrol on August 9, 2021, in an effort to block traffic to the Trident Submarine base on the 76th anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, appeared in Port Orchard Kitsap County District court on September 28. (George Rodkey, Denny Duffell and Br. Gilberto Perez had their citations mitigated by mail.) The court hearing was hybrid with some participants including Judge Marilyn Paja appearing via Zoom and other testifying from the courtroom.

Judge Paja, who has presided over numerous Ground Zero mitigation hearings, reduced the fines from \$66 to \$25, rejecting requests that the cases be dismissed maintaining that she has “a duty to uphold the law.” In reducing the fine the judge lauded Ground Zero’s collaboration with law enforcement in keeping demonstrations safe for all concerned, thanked the mitigants for exercising their constitutional rights and remarked that “your statements should be heard by many more.”

Mack Johnson spoke of his numerous acts of citizen intervention in opposition to evil of unconscionable and unconstitutional nuclear weapons, of his son’s work as a crane operator loading missiles at Bangor and of the hope they both hold that weapons jobs can be converted to peaceful employment in the Green New Deal.

He concluded his testimony by reading his poem, “How Dare You” and requested the judge to dismiss the charge. After Judge Paja reduced the fine but declined to dismiss the charges saying that although she respects Ground Zero’s position of peaceful protest, her job is to enforce the law, Mack asked and finally convinced her to fine him the full amount.

Sean Foley, the youngest of those testifying, told the court that he had grown up believing in peace and justice and that ours is the most beloved nation on earth and his current understanding that we are the terror that keep children up at night with unending war and the ever present threat of nuclear weapons. The judge thanked him for joining in the call for peace and acknowledged the value of his protest.

Firefly outlined the history of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, its role in international

law and his obligation to act under the Nuremberg Principles. He spoke of the experience of the Marshallese and the continuing devastating effects of nuclear weapons testing on their people and homeland and of the threat of nuclear winter that even a limited nuclear weapons exchange would prompt. In light of the failure of elected representatives to respond to his entreaties to stop the funding and deployment of nuclear weapons, he concluded that we citizens must bring an end to weapons of mass destruction.

After Judge Paja failed to dismiss the charges saying she had to uphold the law, Firefly asked her to uphold the greater law (International Law making nuclear war illegal) not just the small law of “unlawful pedestrian in roadway”, the judge smiled and said the fine was \$25.

Mark Sisk told the court, “I was compelled to join others at Ground Zero to stand in the roadway and block the gate to the base. I needed to make a personal statement with others that this insanity cannot be tolerat-

ed. Possessing these horrible weapons with the intent to use them, weapons that could end human life on earth, is immoral, in violation of international law, and passing them on to future generations, along with the threat of human annihilation, is not something I can live with.”

James Manista rejected the charge of “on the roadway unlawfully”, concluding, “Lest the military grow satisfied they have once again without a ruckus quieted the objections of troublesome citizens, they ought not misread the civility of our disobedience. Dismissing protest by conscientious citizens against the greatest conceivable evil as “pedestrians on roadway unlawfully” is disingenuous at best and insulting at worst. I invite

your honor this day to signal our accusers your recognition of the righteousness of rage against these immoral weapons by eliminating any fee for this much-needed “pricking of the nation’s conscience.” Judge Paja declined to dismiss the charge saying she recognized both the right to protest and the validity of the statute.



From left to right, Ground Zero supporters Mack Johnson, Mary Gleysteen, Michael “Firefly” Siptroth, Sean Foley, James Manista, and Sue Ablao gather outside the courtroom. *Photo by Joanne Dufour.*

Mary Gleysteen serves on the Stewardship Council and is taking a lead role on the Caretaker Search Committee.

To Bear Witness

A reflection on a father who was a “cog in the wheel”

By Su Cummings

“Act Four: Rocket Boy.” Ira Glass is speaking on the radio. “So we close our program today with somebody who was just a teenager when the Army ordered him to report to Camp Desert Rock, which was next to the Atomic Energy Commission’s bomb testing range in Nevada in 1955, to do something that he was totally unprepared for. Though, I think maybe nobody could be prepared for this.”

And my ear snagged on the words, “...bomb testing range in Nevada in 1955...”

“He was 19. His name was Paul Zimmer.” If you’ve ever listened to *This American Life*, you’d recognize Ira Glass’s confiding voice. “He grew up to be a writer and a poet, and he wrote about what happened there.” At the time, the soldier had been sworn to secrecy.

Paul Zimmer’s account was read by an actor. “I had paid attention, I had seen the newsreels of Hiroshima. But just watching atomic bombs go off, I thought it was going to be kind of cool. I thought the story would be a way to interest girls.” *This sounded like something my dad would have said.* “They didn’t tell us anything about what was going to happen, no initiation, no training. And the first time, I had no idea what to expect.” The actor’s low-toned voice is reflective.

“We traveled by convoy and buses in the middle of the night to assemble at the site. We shuffled around in the cold, chain smoking, until we were ordered into the trenches. The trenches were long, thin slits in the desert earth only wide enough for us to line up single file. We wore our steel helmets, but we’re not issued earplugs, eye covers, or any protective clothing. Then they told us to get down... I only became terrified when I saw the flash, bright enough where, even with my eyes closed, I could see the bones of my hands over my eyes.

“A shock wave crashed over the trench top, and we were ordered to stand up and look. We did and saw the mushroom cloud, glowing purple and changing colors, rising and rising up. I saw eight atomic blasts in total, all on different days. Some devices dropped from airplanes, and some detonated from towers.”

Stop there. Like those towers my father built?

“There was an aerial burst and an underground blast as well,” Zimmer wrote. “Sometimes, during the shock wave, the trench sides caved in and buried us alive, so we had to claw our way out from our own graves... When clearance was radioed back, we were ordered to walk forward into the blast area to bear witness. As far as I could tell, bearing witness was the entire reason we were there.”

The Atomic Energy Commission’s professed goals during these tests were to improve weapon design for thermonuclear systems, safety testing and conducting

“bio-medical experiments.”

“The largest bomb I witnessed was called Turk, and it was almost three times the size of the Hiroshima bomb. It was dropped from a 500-foot tower”—yes, *to answer my question, exactly like those towers my dad built—*

“and our trenches were approximately two and a half miles from ground zero. The blast yield was bigger than expected, so the brass ordered us to retreat to the buses, where we swept each other off with kitchen brooms.”

And now I hear my father’s voice—this was just a few years ago—divulging a secret of his own. “I worked on top of 500-foot towers installing ‘light pipes,’ consisting of an array of tubes inserted into different parts of the ‘device.’” In ‘55, my father had been sent to the Nevada Test Site in the Mojave Desert to help build the equipment for above-ground bomb tests there. As he told me this, an oblique look and a tenuous smile crossed his face. He said, “We never called it a bomb.”

Zimmer’s account continued, “The next morning, some of us were bussed back into the area in our fatigues and ordered to walk forward to bear witness. There was still a heavy smell of ozone in the air. The vegetation was shredded, scorched, torn out by the roots, and small animals and birds were scattered, dead, crippled, and blind, lurching about, some still trying to find a place to hide.”

The test code-named “Turk” was part of Operation Teapot, a 1955 series of 14 proof-tests of various fission devices with low to moderate yields—by this time, a bomb three times the size of Hiroshima was considered low-yield.

Zimmer was one of the soldiers who participated in the Desert Rock VI exercises, which were ostensibly to familiarize troops with the capabilities of nuclear weapons and the conditions of atomic combat. Keep in mind that the big brass at the first nuclear test observed from more than twice that two-and-a-half-mile distance—and they were sheltered in a bunker. No wonder some called what Zimmer did “guinea pig” duty.

Turk was conducted by the University of California Radiation Laboratory (UCRL was renamed the Lawrence Radiation Lab, or LRL; now it’s called the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory) to test a “primary,” the initial fission explosion that detonates the larger fusion chain reaction, for a thermonuclear weapon.

During a detonation, those six-inch stainless tubes under vacuum that my father installed allowed escaping energy to be captured by astronomically high-speed cameras (ten thousand frames per second!) located at the far end of the very long pipes. As he described it, Dad took a pen from his pocket and pulled over a scrap of paper,

To Bear Witness... continued on page 9

sketching a diagram of the apparatus that enabled scientists to record from afar as much information as possible about what occurred during the explosion. All in the fraction of an instant before the thing vaporized itself.

For his Nevada experience, Dad has just one alarming adjective: “Awesome!”

Paul Zimmer again: “We walked past crumpled vehicles and artillery pieces that had been placed in the open, mannequins staked out, khakis torn apart and melted grotesquely. Caged Cheshire pigs that had been dressed in specially-fitting Army uniforms were dead or mangled, the latter still shrieking their last. Herds of blasted sheep and cows were mangled together, dead or moaning.

“We never had to write reports, nor did anyone ask us what we saw. Because it turned out, they were looking at us. They wanted to see how young men reacted to an atomic blast. Apparently, that’s all they wanted to do, and I was not selected because I was special. I had no need for qualifications, aside from being a 19-year-old boy.” Zimmer was an unwitting cog in a wheel, helping to test nuclear weapons.

The Atomic Energy Commission originally intended the Nevada Test Site for quick experiments with small scale nukes, according to the Atomic Heritage Foundation. The results would then lead to the development of bigger atomic bombs and advanced thermonuclear weapons. In reality, large-scale atmospheric tests were common at the site for about 12 years.

“Over the years of America’s open-air atomic bomb testing in Nevada, a few thousand Army men participated,” Zimmer wrote. “It does not matter anymore that only feeble attempts were made by the government to find out how these experiences affected us. Lately, I’ve begun to realize that I am one of the last people living in America to have actually experienced close-up explosions of atomic bombs.” My father is among this elite brotherhood too, hanging on at ninety-three.

“We’re all dying now, and most of us are already dead. I’m not aware of anyone’s health being affected by the blasts, but some years ago, I did check with the Veterans Administration about the possible radiation dosage I received during my participation. I was informed that the radiation film badge that I wore throughout my four months at Desert Rock had been burned up in a government warehouse records fire in St. Louis some decades ago.”

I picture my dad wearing his pocket protector and clipping a small red square to his belt before going off to work—he was only a few years older than Paul Zimmer. I knew he worked at LRL, or sometimes he called it the radlab, when we lived in Livermore until I was about seven. It’s disconcerting to think that I didn’t connect Dad’s job with “the bomb” for most of my adult life, until I sank my teeth into his revelation—when he was almost

ninety—that he was a cog in the wheel, helping to test nuclear weapons.

Zimmer again: “Now, in my late years, when I can conjure that brief, surreal period of my youth, I try in vain to make some sense of it. And in some ways, it has become my responsibility to, at least, recollect and tell how that great flash and blast permanently reached into my very young mind and heart. How those enormous sounds deadened my ears and still ring in them to this day. How the crush of shock waves sometimes buried us alive in our trenches. I feel it my duty to tell the reckless absurdity of it all.

“We keep threatening to unleash these bombs, so I suspect that, one day, we will. Most of us have forgotten what we are capable of. I have not.”

Ira Glass came back on the radio. “John Conlee, reading an essay by Paul Zimmer. A version of this essay was first published in *The Georgia Review*. Paul Zimmer died in 2019. He was 85. Over his life, he had health problems that he and his family believe were related to his radiation exposure.”

The total yield of all nuclear tests conducted between 1945 and 1980 was estimated at 510 megatons. Above-ground tests alone accounted for 428 megatons, equivalent to over 29,000 Hiroshima-size bombs.

One can barely imagine the environmental ruin at what’s now called the Nevada National Security Site, but you’ll find an upbeat reading of its usefulness today on the website of the outfit running counterterrorism training, sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security, that conducts “the most realistic performance-based radiological/nuclear WMD counterterrorism training possible... using radioactive materials and contaminated environments. The rich nuclear testing history of the NNSS offers dynamic training opportunities today.”

My father’s words were saying, “We called it ‘the device,’” but his face said something too: *I’m self-conscious telling you this. I know what I’m saying. Perhaps I didn’t fully understand then, but I do now.*

I turned the sticking pages of the photo album Dad shared, drowning in the yellowing photos he took on Bikini and Enewetok Atolls, where he later built light pipes for tests in the Marshall Islands Pacific Proving Grounds. I sensed the breeze moving palm fronds. Felt the rays raising sweat on men’s naked chests. My father looks across at the camera; is that awareness of the errand he’s on? Does he know he’s helping the race along to utter destruction?

Did he ask a friend to take the photo so he could say, “I was there”—is that what’s written on his face? “That’s me, making my mark, my contribution in the relay race that never ends.” Did he think anyone could win that race? Inside that LRL trailer they’re smiling, a

Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen: Disarmament as a Leap of Faith

By Leonard Eiger

"I am grateful for having been invited to speak to you on disarmament because it forces me to a kind of personal disarmament. This is a subject I have thought about and prayed over for many years. I can recall vividly hearing the news of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945. I was deeply shocked. I could not then put into words the shock I felt from the news that a city of hundreds of thousands of people had been devastated by a single bomb. Hiroshima challenged my faith as a Christian in a way I am only now beginning to understand. That awful event and its successor at Nagasaki sank into my soul, as they have in fact sunk into the souls of all of us, whether we recognize it or not."

Those are the opening lines of the "Faith and Disarmament" speech Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen delivered on June 12, 1981. Hunthausen had become active in resistance to the U.S. stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the new Trident submarine-based nuclear weapons system, which included the Bangor Trident submarine base in Puget Sound just 20 miles west of Seattle.

In that speech, Hunthausen referred to the Trident submarines based there as "the Auschwitz of Puget Sound." In context, it was both a profound and prophetic statement of fact. As Hunthausen said, "Trident is the Auschwitz of Puget Sound because of the massive cooperation required in our area — the enormous sinful complicity that is necessary — for the eventual incineration of millions of our brother and sister human beings."

Bill Moyer of the Backbone Campaign (dedicated to a world "where life, community, nature, and our obligations to future generations are honored as sacred") spoke to Hunthausen's controversial statement during a talk at Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action on August 5, 2018: "In his [Hunthausen's] comparison of Trident submarines to the 'Auschwitz of Puget Sound,' which everybody quotes, it wasn't so much that they are a tool of genocide, which, of course, they are... but it was that they are invisible; the neighbors of Auschwitz didn't want to know what was going on; they felt more comfortable when it was under the surface."

Essentially, Hunthausen made the invisible visible so that people would be forced to bring it into their consciousness and address its moral implications.

Well before his 1981 "Faith and Disarmament" speech, Hunthausen was gaining a deep understanding of, and respect for, the Pacific Life Community and Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, the activist community developing in nonviolent resistance to nuclear weapons, especially Trident. These were people of deep convictions who were engaging in nonviolent civil resistance, literally putting their bodies on the line, and

were fully prepared to accept the legal consequences of their actions.

They were essentially attempting to make the invisible visible through their actions.

At a time when the United States is engaging in the largest buildup of our nuclear arsenal since the Cold War, and when we are increasing the risk of nuclear war with not only Russia but also China, we would do well to learn from Archbishop Hunthausen, who died in July 2018 and whose 100th birthday would have been August 21st.

War tax resistance became a personal action Hunthausen felt he could take. He redirected a symbolic portion of his income tax as a protest against nuclear weapons, placing it in an escrow account benefiting the World Peace Tax Fund.

"I think the teaching of Jesus tells us to render to a nuclear-armed Caesar what that Caesar deserves — tax resistance. And to begin to render to God alone that complete trust which we now give, through our tax dollars, to a demonic form of power," he said in his "Faith and Disarmament" speech. "Some would call what I am urging 'civil disobedience.' I prefer to see it as obedience to God."

Hunthausen's views on a number of issues, including nuclear weapons, did not sit well with the Vatican, and Hunthausen suffered the consequences. He did, however, have the support of some of his fellow priests and bishops. One was Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, who told me, in a June 29, 2021 interview, that he was "proud to have been a friend to Ray Hunthausen, and supportive of what he did."

Gumbleton wrote a tribute to Hunthausen in Frank Fromherz's 2019 book *A Disarming Spirit: The life of Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen* in which he concluded, "Ray Hunthausen is a role model and hero for me because of his integrity and total commitment to leading the Church in its mission to transform our world into as close an image of the Reign of God as possible. I am a better person and bishop because I knew him."

Hunthausen's actions and words contributed to a deepening awareness of the evil of nuclear weapons at that time, Gumbleton said.

"Right now there isn't an awareness. If you were to go into a grocery store and interview people at random you would find that almost no one knows anything about our nuclear arsenal, even though we spend fantastic amounts of money," he said. "Right now there is fighting over an infrastructure bill in the Senate, and you could easily take half the military budget and take care of everything in terms of human needs. But no one would ever

Archbishop Hunthausen... continued on page 11

suggest that, and for me it is a profound and moral evil.”

For Gumbleton, as with Hunthausen, beyond the evil of building and deploying nuclear weapons, it is an absolute sin to commit to their use. Gumbleton spoke of how every crew member on a Trident submarine has taken an oath, and must be prepared and committed to obeying the order to launch the ballistic missiles that would incinerate millions of human beings in a nuclear war. That, in itself, he said, is an “absolute sin.”

Gumbleton noted that in his Faith and Disarmament speech, Hunthausen quoted Jesuit Fr. Richard McSorley, who wrote the 1976 article “It’s a Sin to Build a Nuclear Weapon.” McSorley wrote: “The taproot of violence in our society today is our intention to use nuclear weapons. Once we have agreed to that, all other evil is minor in comparison. Until we squarely face the question of our consent to use nuclear weapons, any hope of large scale improvement of public morality is doomed to failure.”

“The impact of our nuclear weapons is beyond description,” Gumbleton said. “It’s the destruction of the planet as we know it. Once we’ve made that moral decision, then we can make any kind of moral decision and use violence. So you have a peace officer who can kneel on the neck of a man for 8 ½ minutes — and he died — and feel that’s OK, that kind of violence. And in a sense that’s nothing compared to what we are preparing for each and every day [with nuclear weapons]. So there is no issue that exceeds this in its evil.”

Gumbleton also noted that while some bishops have said President Joe Biden should be denied Communion for his stance on abortion, Catholics serving on a Trident ballistic missile submarine can receive Communion from a Catholic chaplain.

“They reinforce these enlisted people wherever we have these weapons, essentially giving their blessing and that of the church,” Gumbleton said. “You have Catholic chaplains supporting the military people who have the intention to use nuclear weapons.”

Instead, Gumbleton said, the church needs reform to contend with the evil that threatens to destroy the planet: through war and environmental destruction. “Right now we need a profound conversion within the church if we are going to speak God’s word with any type of authenticity,” he said. “That is not going on right now... So that makes someone like Ray Hunthausen stand out all the more. If we had 300 of the bishops speaking out like Ray Hunthausen, we might be getting someplace.”

In his 1981 speech, Hunthausen challenged our nation to disarm and spoke boldly to what he saw as the central reasons for our nation’s reliance on nuclear weapons: “We whose nuclear arms terrify millions around the globe are terrified by the thought of being without them. The thought of our nation without such power feels naked. Propaganda and a particular way of life have clothed us to death. To relinquish our hold on global destruction feels like risking everything, and it is risking everything

— but in a direction opposite to the way in which we now risk everything. Nuclear arms protect privilege an exploitation. Giving them up would mean our having to give up economic power over other peoples. Peace and justice go together. On the path we now follow, our economic policies toward other countries require nuclear weapons. Giving up the weapons would mean giving up more than our means of global terror. It would mean giving up the reason for the terror—our privileged place in the world.”

Forty years since Hunthausen called Trident “the Auschwitz of Puget Sound,” and 100 years since his birth, he continues to call us to make the invisible visible, to state clearly that killing is simply wrong, and that nuclear weapons, which are omniscidal by design, are truly an abomination.

Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action and the Pacific Life Community still work to raise awareness of the threat posed by the Trident nuclear submarine base in the heart of Puget Sound and the Seattle Archdiocese. Construction of 12 new ballistic missile submarines is underway, a new missile and warhead are in the planning stages, and current warheads have been made more lethal, adding heat to a new Cold War.

It comes down to our individual choice of how to engage the issue. Archbishop Hunthausen did not tell us what to do; he told us what he was going to do and why. His spirit lives on in his words and actions. He still calls us to take up the cross in the nuclear age. How will we join him?

Archbishop Hunthausen, Presente!

Leonard Eiger serves on the Stewardship Council. This is a revised version of an article that originally appeared in the *National Catholic Reporter* on August 23, 2021. *A Disarming Spirit: The life of Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen* is available from Tsehai Publishers. All profits from its sale will be given to Ground Zero Community.

To Bear Witness... continued from page 9

few buddies hanging around, breathing the damned air of a nuclear bomb test site.

I’m staring at a fading record of his time in such a place, which displaced sanity with madness. A place that mushroomed out of men’s impotence to master human weakness in humanity’s interest. That commemorated fear and power-greed as a murdered desert and blackened coral islands—sand, salt and liquid sapphire, vaporized, contaminated, sunk.

My old father said, “We never called it a bomb.” Hearing his words was something that I was totally unprepared for. Though, I think maybe nobody could be prepared for this.

Su Cummings is a writer and artist living in Seattle. More of her work can be found on her website, www.sucummings.com.

Navy attempts to narrow public's right to know

By Glen Milner

The purpose of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is to ensure the public's right to know what their government is doing and how its actions affect them. The law is based upon the principle that an informed citizenry is essential for a democratic society.

However, for the seventh year in a row, the Department of Defense (DOD) is attempting to insert regulations in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would create unnecessary and overbroad secrecy provisions at odds with the purpose and goals of the FOIA.

The NDAA for 2022 was released by the House Armed Services Committee on June 15, 2021. Open government advocates are assailing the proposed legislation as an indefensible restriction on the FOIA.

Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., the most senior U.S. Senator and Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, told CQ Roll Call that he continues to oppose what he called an "anti-transparency" proposal.

"I've lost count how many times that the Defense Department has come to Congress with this overbroad proposal to shield vast amounts of Pentagon information from public disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act," Sen. Leahy said in a statement. "This version of DOD's proposal contains the same fatal flaw as did previous ones: There are no clear limits on what kinds of information the Pentagon could hide from public view."

Over the past 35 years, I have used the FOIA to learn about risks to Puget Sound communities due to U.S. Navy operations in the region.

In December 2003, I sent a FOIA request to Naval Magazine Indian Island, near Port Townsend, for records regarding potential impacts to the community from activities at the ammunition depot. Responsive records were withheld based upon a so-called "High 2" exemption — a FOIA exemption created through the courts that went far beyond the plain language of Exemption 2 to protect records "related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency." The High 2 exemption was being used increasingly by federal agencies to withhold requested records because it could be applied to almost any record held by the federal government. In September 2006, I filed a FOIA lawsuit against the Navy in U.S. District Court in Seattle, *Milner v. Navy*.

On March 7, 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 8-1 against the Navy and issued an opinion regarding *Milner v. Navy* that overturned 30 years of established legal precedents pertaining to Exemption 2 of the FOIA and significantly narrowed the scope of that exemption. Justice Kagan delivered the opinion for the court and stated that the goal of the FOIA is for

"broad disclosure" and that exemptions to the FOIA must be "given a narrow compass."

In response to *Milner v. Navy*, the DOD has repeatedly tried to undermine the FOIA to keep critical information from the public. In 2012, Congress passed a law that allowed the DOD to exclude certain infrastructure information, or "Critical Infrastructure Security Information."



For each year since 2015, the DOD has attempted to insert additional provisions in the NDAA that would expand the DOD's authority to restrict the release for certain unclassified military information.

Examples of records released through the FOIA, involving risk to the community resulting from U.S. Navy operations, show why further restrictions to the FOIA involving the military should not be enacted:

- A record dated January 25, 2012, released in August 2013, stated that Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor and Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay lacked sufficient land mass for safe explosives safety siting. The record stated, "The combined effect of siting the EHWs and Refit Complex (which is the Delta Pier at Bangor) would have required lengthening both submarine bases by approximately 1.3 miles. That degree of expansion was not available, when the bases were developed, and would be that much more difficult today, requiring large acquisitions and displacement of residences outside the current base boundaries." The 2012 record explained that the problem with land mass will only get worse in the future, and stated, "This delta will only widen, as SSBN and SSGN platforms are replaced with new submarines that may be tasked with combined missions."

Navy attempts... continued on page 13

Navy attempts... continued from page 12

- An April 12, 2018 record titled, Explosive Handling Wharf-2 (EHW-2), Strategic Weapons Facility Pacific, Safety Assessment Report, was released in redacted form in February 2020. The Navy's safety assessment falsely stated, "an earthquake... that occurs in the Cascadia Subduction Zone, is not expected to have an impact on EHW-2 as the tsunami will be largely attenuated by the time it reaches the facility." However, the opposite is true — a tsunami would gain significant strength in Hood Canal. According to recent Washington State Department of Natural Resources modeling, the explosives handling wharves at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor and nearby piers could see waves in excess of 20 feet from a tsunami.

The National Defense Authorization Act, a massive authorization bill which has been marked up in secret in previous years, is not the proper vehicle to amend the FOIA.

Public disclosure of U.S. Navy operations that have the potential of harmful impacts is necessary for the protection of the Puget Sound region. Unfortunately, the Navy only works to keep these activities cloaked in secrecy.

Glen Milner serves on the Stewardship Council and works with the Media and Outreach Committee. This article originally appeared as an editorial in the Kitsap Sun Newspaper on July 19.

Billboards... continued from page 6

the USS Henry M. Jackson (SSBN-730), home-ported 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."

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 Navy has recently deployed the smaller W76-2 "low-yield" or tactical nuclear weapon (approximately eight kilotons) on select ballistic submarine missiles at Bangor, dangerously creating a lower threshold for the use of nuclear weapons.

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 en-

during 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 waterfront.

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 re-certified 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 warheads 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 four billboard ads were displayed near the following locations in Seattle: MLK Jr. Way and S. Jackson St., Aurora Ave. N. and N 41st St., Elliott Ave. W. and W Mercer Pl., and E. Marginal Way S. and S. Mead St.



Widening the reach of our anti-nuclear message. This billboard is along Aurora Avenue. Photo by Tom Krebsbach.

Leonard Eiger serves on the Stewardship Council and chairs the Communications and Outreach committee.

GROUND ZERO

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

Phone: 360-930-8697
Website: www.gzcenter.org
E-mail: info@gzcenter.org

Address Service Requested

**Send us your change of
address before the post
office does and it saves
Ground Zero money!**

*If you no longer want to receive our
newsletter, just let us know and
we'll take you off our mailing list.*

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. Postage Paid
SILVERDALE WA
98383
Permit # 111

*“It is absurd to be spending
\$138,700 every single minute
on weapons that cause catastrophic
human harm rather than spending it
to protect the health of citizens.”*

— Beatrice Fihn

Peace Fleet! 2021

By Glen Milner

Five Peace Fleet sailors entered Elliott Bay on August 4 around 11:45am in one sailboat and one kayak. The weather was good on the water, sunny, about 80 degrees and with a slight breeze. For the second year in a row, no U.S. Navy warships were present, no Blue Angels or other military aircraft, and no Canadian military vessels.

All boats were launched from Bell Harbor Marina near Pier 66. The Port of Seattle was accommodating for yet another year.

Rodney Brunelle was self-propelled in his own hand-crafted kayak, with his PEACE flag and disarming spirit.

Dirk Gleysteen operated his beautiful 24-foot sailboat, the *S/V Silent*, with Sallie Shawl, Tom



Peace Fleet sailor Sallie Shawl makes final preparations before heading out to Elliott Bay. *Photo by Karol Milner.*

Krebsbach, and Glen Milner onboard. Displayed prominently on the *S/V Silent* were banners stating NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE ILLEGAL—GET THEM OUT OF PUGET SOUND and ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS, and a large peace flag.

Peace Fleet participants on the shore included Sigrid Salo, Hannah McFeron, Alisa McFeron, Karol Milner, Mike Stuart, and Bob Trutnau.

Where in years past there have been giant warships and Coast Guard vessels with machine guns on the bow, it was peaceful and clear from the downtown waterfront across to West Seattle.

Glen Milner has worked with Ground Zero since the days of White Train resistance. He lives in Lake Forest Park with his wife Karol.