

# Ground Zero

October 2022

Volume 27 Issue 4



## ***Love and Patience***

**Becca Thebad and her gift of the beautiful sunflower**

By Glen Milner

On September 16, Becca Thebad brought her gift to Ground Zero—a five-foot tall rebar sculpture of a Sunflower rising from a broken missile and a base of Lotus Flower petals.

Around noon, 21 people attended the brief ceremony and celebration of the new artwork at Ground Zero, including members of Becca's family and other well-wishers from Port Townsend. The Sunflower was attached to the stump of a fir tree, just west of the Ground

Zero house.

Becca was first contacted in the summer of 2019 about using the rebar that had been erected for the first Peace Pagoda in 1982 and later stopped by Kitsap County. The old rebar was too rusty to be used for construction. The new Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda is built in nearly the exact location as the 1982 Peace Pagoda—

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**Together we can move the gears of war to peace.** A close-up of the detail of the sunflower sculpture now installed at Ground Zero. *Photo by Glen Milner.*

requiring the removal of the rebar. Ground Zero and Nipponzan Myohoji members wished to somehow honor the work from 1982—to honor both the Nipponzan Myohoji monks and nuns from 1982 and the continued vision of the Peace Pagoda at Ground Zero.

Ground Zero and Nipponzan Myohoji members, of course, had multiple ideas for a commemorative artwork. Much of the time, we had lost track of which member had been contacting Becca. But Becca stayed on task, made a design, and told us it was time to do the work.

And with Becca's love of her craft, patience with Ground Zero and Nipponzan Myohoji monks, and our patience with each other—the beautiful sculpture was completed.

Some of Becca Thebad's other artwork can be seen at <https://beccathebad.blogspot.com>.

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

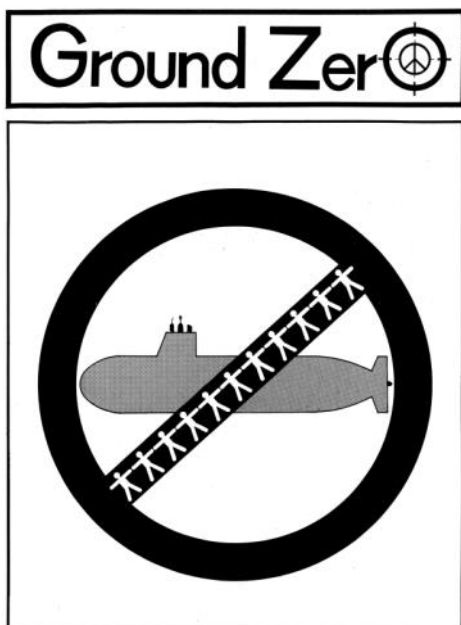
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## Old Ground Zero Newsletters Available!

By Glen Milner

The complete 40-issue set of *Ground Zero* newsletters, from May 1982 to Summer 1992, is now in digital format and available for public use.

The set was scanned and computer-enhanced for reading by brightening and lightening the brownish paper background.



David Preston at Blue Sky Printing in Poulsbo completed the task in his spare time at work to keep costs down, finishing in August 2022.

The old *Ground Zero* newsletters are not only an archive of historical records, they contain content that is still very useful for today.

The first and last editions have articles by Bob Aldridge. The first edition has an article on the Peace Pagoda by Gyoko Hanawa. All of the editions provide inspiration, humor, and act as a guidebook for action.

In order to keep the files accurate (letters and words) and to have the best appearance for reading, these newsletters were not scanned for text recognition. Readers may, of course, reformat copies for text.

You are encouraged to download all 40 *Ground Zero* newsletters to keep for your use. A link to the 40 issues is at <https://1drv.ms/u/s!Al8QqFnnE036gYNJK4t3JV-gd49VQQ?e=5fuQqN>, or check the Ground Zero website, or e-mail [in-fo@gzcenter.org](mailto:info@gzcenter.org) for the link.

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**Glen Milner** organizes the annual Peace Fleet. At left, the first edition of the *Ground Zero* newsletter, issued in March 1982, Volume 1, No. 1.

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# Annual Meeting Coming Up!

By Mary Gleysteen

Attend the Annual Ground Zero Membership Meeting and Premier showing of "Nuclear Weapons: From Opposition to Abolition."

Saturday, October 22, 2022, at Ground Zero Center. Meeting begins promptly at 10:00 am. Joins us for a pot-luck lunch at 12:30 pm followed by Tom Rogers' new slideshow and a cider press party.

The annual membership meeting was established in November 2002 as part of the organizational structure of Ground Zero. The agenda for this year's annual meeting includes a brief review of 2022 activities and a discussion of goals for the future and activities for 2023.

This year's annual meeting will feature the premier and videotaping of Tom Rogers' presentation titled, "Nuclear Weapons: From Opposition to Abolition."

We will also be filling positions for co-chairs, secretary, treasurer, and committee member positions for the Stewardship Council which is designed to share the responsibilities and work of Ground Zero into manageable sections. Decisions of the Stewardship Council and committees are made by consensus and in accord with the Mission Statement, which reads, "Founded in 1977, Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action offers the op-

portunity 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."

The Ground Zero Stewardship Council meets once a month, often with a hybrid zoom option. All meetings are open to all members.

Let us know if you will need childcare provided on site or transportation from the ferry. Bring your energy and ideas, family and friends! If you have access to apples, bring

them for the cider making. If you want to take cider home, bring a container with a tight-fitting lid. Dress for the weather since cider pressing will be outside.

We invite all to come and share your ideas for a peaceful and larger world community and to help continue with resistance to the Trident nuclear weapons system.

Please join us. For more information, contact Mary Gleysteen at [marygleysteen@gmail.com](mailto:marygleysteen@gmail.com).



**Fellowship and inspiration.** Members gather at a past Ground Zero gathering. Photo by Leonard Eiger.

**Mary Gleysteen** lives in Kingston where she volunteers serving homeless residents. She has worked for nuclear disarmament for over 40 years.

## Choose Life!

By Michael "Firefly" Siptroth

The Earth Is So Beautiful and Abundant,  
Such Magnificent Gifts!  
No To War, No To Nuclear Weapons!!  
Yes To Life, Yes To Preserving Hope!!  
Clean water, air, earth, food, housing=  
REAL National Security, Not Weapons of Mass  
Destruction!  
Ask people, what kind of World do you want?  
Green housing, parks, healthy food, clean energy!  
Family, friends, community, meaningful life, happiness!  
This Nuclear Reign of Terror, NO MORE!

**Michael (Firefly) Siptroth** serves on the Stewardship Council. He lives in Belfair.

## Follow GZ on Social Media

Ground Zero has been working to create a robust presence on social media platforms. Many thanks to Mike McCormick and Leonard Eiger for their efforts. We are not buying ads on social media platforms—just using them for posts.

Follow us on Twitter, at <https://twitter.com/GZCenterPoulsbo>. YouTube, at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBm5s9J2OPuefyNBKeWITGQ>. And for Facebook, at <https://www.facebook.com/groundzerocenter>.

See links on the Ground Zero website, at [www.gzcenter.org](http://www.gzcenter.org).

# Events and Action Mark the 77th Anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atomic Bombings

By Leonard Eiger

Members and friends of Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action spread messages of nonviolence and nuclear abolition at the peak of our Pacific Northwest Summer. Although not a designated tourist destination, Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, just 20 miles from Seattle, hosts the largest concentration of deployed nuclear warheads in the U.S. arsenal. Just one of the eight Trident submarines based at Bangor carries the destructive force of over 1,200 Hiroshima bombs (the Hiroshima bomb was 15 kilotons).



**Walking the talk.** Activists gathered early in the morning on August 8 and closed the main entrance to the Trident base for several minutes. *Photo by Karol Milner.*

The intensive focus on nuclear abolition was most appropriate at this time in which Humanity arguably faces the worst nuclear danger in history; in addition to the crisis surrounding Ukraine, all of the nuclear-armed nations are embracing and escalating a new, improved and less stable Nuclear Arms Race 2.0!

Approximately 40 people showed up on August 8th at a flash mob demonstration against Trident nuclear weapons at the Bangor base. The demonstration was in the roadway, and blocked traffic entering the base's Main Gate during morning rush hour traffic. Thirteen demonstrators were detained and cited by authorities.

Activists gathered early Monday morning on August 8th at the the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action in Poulsbo to remember the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 77 years ago and to call for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Reverend Crystal Zerfoss of the Kitsap Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (UUF) led the group in a blessing before they walked to the Main Gate of Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor carrying banners, signs, and flags early Monday morning when base personnel were reporting for work.

At the gate, while people held a peaceful vigil on the roadside, approximately two dozen activists entered

the roadway blocking the road to the base and performed in a flash mob dance to the song "War (What is it good for?)" sung by Motown singer Edwin Starr. Video of the flash mob is at <https://youtu.be/Lk92BaMfV84>.

When the dance was completed, some people remained on the roadway holding two large banners that read "ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS" and "NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE ILLEGAL: Get them out of Kitsap County" respectively. Eleven activists were removed from the roadway by Washington State Patrol

Officers and cited for "Pedestrian on roadway illegally". The other two activists crossed the Blue Line onto the submarine base, were detained by Naval security personnel, and cited for "Trespassing" on Federal property.

Those cited by the State Patrol are Sue Ablao of Bremerton; Philip Davis of Bremerton; Susan Delaney of Bothell; Sean Foley of Seattle; Anne Hall of Lopez Island; David Hall of Lopez Island; Elizabeth Murray of Escondido, California; Gilberto Perez of Bainbridge Island; George Rodkey of Tacoma; Michael Siptroth of Belfair; and Caroline Wildflower of Port Townsend. The two activists cited by the Navy are: Macknight Johnson of Silverdale; and Victor White of Oceanside, California.

Most of those cited by the State Patrol had hearings in Kitsap County District Court near the end of September. Those cited for Federal Trespassing are still awaiting their notice to appear in Tacoma Federal District Court.

The morning vigil, flash mob and nonviolent direct action were the culmination of a two-day remembrance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. Mary and Jim Aldridge joined the remembrance, representing their father, Robert C. Aldridge, peacemaker and guiding inspiration for Ground Zero Center and Trident resistance who passed away on April 29th. Mary Aldridge spoke about her father's last book, "The Goodness Field" and his work on the creation of a Global Constructive Program leading to a world with justice, sustainability and peace for all of humanity.

The annual Pacific Northwest Interfaith Peace Walk ended at the Ground Zero Center to participate in the weekend remembrance, and Monday's vigil and direct action. The walk was coordinated by Rev. Senji Kanaeda of the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Temple on Bainbridge Island. The Nipponzan Myohoji order was

**Events and Action... continued on page 5**

founded in 1917 by Nichidatsu Fujii, and actively engages in the peace movement worldwide by organizing walks for nuclear disarmament and human rights.

On August 1st, local activists met the U.S. Navy fleet in Seattle's Elliott Bay in a water-based nonviolent protest against the glorification of weapons of war at the Seattle Seafair festival. There were five Peace Fleet boats on the water with 11 peace activists aboard and about 25 peace activists on Pier 62 on the Seattle waterfront at the same time. The protest was intended to highlight the unrepresented and forgotten victims of these weapons of war and to call attention to the crimes of our nation, and because the celebration of warships in our harbor helps bring about the normalcy of modern war. This was the 21st year for this demonstration

On July 24th, a full-page ad was published in the newspaper of record, the Kitsap Sun, speaking to military personnel at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor. The ad is an appeal to Navy personnel to resist orders to launch nuclear weapons.

The Appeal to Navy Personnel specifically requests that members of the armed forces:

- Resist illegal orders.
- Refuse to kill innocent civilians.
- Refuse the order to use nuclear weapons.

Regarding the Appeal to Navy Personnel, peace activists are not requesting that military personnel leave the service, but instead that they serve honorably and in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and international law.

Ground Zero also paid for full-page ads in Cascadia Daily News and the Kitsap Sun for the remembrance of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The ads state:

*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.*

*Remembering the atomic bomb victims of Nagasaki and Hiroshima is essential to preventing the use of nuclear weapons from happening again.*

The ads appeared in Cascadia Daily News on August 3rd, and in the Kitsap Sun on August 5th and 9th. All of the ads can be viewed at [gzcenter.org](http://gzcenter.org).

Eight Trident SSBN submarines are deployed at Bangor. Currently, each 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. 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.

The hubris and idiocy of ALL the nuclear-armed nations is quite bizarre as they all hold humanity under a nuclear Sword of Damocles. Furthermore, the U.S. and Russia hold over 90 percent of all nuclear weapons, and it is up to these two nations to negotiate in good faith toward complete and total disarmament.



**Crossing the line:** Mac Johnson and Victor White stepped onto base property to deliver the Appeal to Navy Personnel. *Still from video taken by Glen Milner.*

Triumphalist rhetoric about using the war in Ukraine to create a "weakened" Russia is not the way to reduce the nuclear danger. Rather than humiliating Russia, the U.S. should be seeking diplomatic means to build a face-saving exit ramp for President Putin. The (nuclear) stakes are far too high to be waging a proxy war in the selfish and shortsighted interests of the U.S.

As the recent ads said, remembering the atomic bomb victims of Nagasaki and Hiroshima is essential to preventing the use of nuclear weapons from happening again. It is our monumental, yet essential, task to ensure that humanity never suffers the horrors experienced by the victims (Hibakusha) of those two atomic bombings.

After 77 years, it is high time to end the arms race, achieve complete and total nuclear disarmament, and learn to resolve conflicts without violence.

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



# Hiroshima and Nagasaki Action Defendants Testify

## Resisters Have Their Day in Court

Report by Mary Gleysteen and Leonard Eiger

During Ground Zero Center's August 8th vigil and nonviolent direct action twelve activists risked arrest by blocking the roadway to traffic entering the Bangor Trident nuclear submarine base. Eleven were cited by the Washington State Patrol for being in the roadway illegally (outside the naval base). The other two crossed onto the base and were cited by the Navy. Five of those cited by the State Patrol had their day in Kitsap County District Court on September 27th. The others have either paid their fines, mitigated by mail, or will have later court dates.

Br. Gilberto Perez, Michael "Firefly" Siptroth and Caroline Wildflower were present in the courtroom, while Anne and David Hall appeared via Zoom.



**Bringing their witness to the courtroom.** Jim Lyman, Gilberto Perez (defendant), Caroline Wildflower (defendant), Senji Kanaeda, Firefly Siptroth (defendant) Sue Ablao, and Kathy Railsback. *Photo by Mary Gleysteen.*

Ground Zero Center's ace court reporter Mary Gleysteen sat in and wrote the following synopsis of the proceedings.

Judge Piper Thornburgh, who presided over the hearings, is new to cases involving Ground Zero defendants. She toyed with the idea of converting the hearing to contested cases and dismissing them because there was no police report accompanying the charges. However, she realized she could not do that because the officers and prosecutor would not have sufficient notice or time to prepare (and because the defendants were clear about having been in the roadway blocking traffic to the base).

All of the defendants were allowed to present

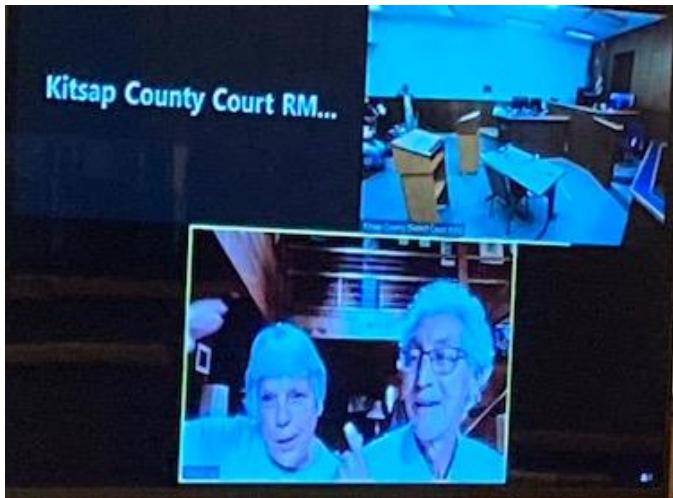
their testimonies for the record relating to their reasons for taking their actions that day. The following are highlights of their testimonies (in italics). Those who presented in person did not have formal, written statements. Anne and Dave Hall's full statements can be read at the Ground Zero website ([gzcenter.org](http://gzcenter.org)).

*Rev. Anne Hall: Forty years ago, I attended a presentation by Dr. Judith Lipton. She described what would happen if a nuclear bomb hit Seattle. She spoke of a fire ball 3 times the temperature of the surface of the sun, winds up to 300 miles per hour, human beings vaporized, or horribly burned, crushed by falling buildings, sliced by flying glass. And she said, if the bomb hit during a weekday, when parents were at work and children were in school or daycare, children would die without their parents ever reaching them. My children were small, I couldn't bear that. I couldn't bear it happening to my children or to any parents and their children, in any country. So, I called and wrote to the Congress and the President. I met with my Senators and Representatives. I spoke at public events. I joined Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. We leafletted asking workers on the base to leave their jobs. We walked into the base attempting to speak to the commander. We sat on the tracks to stop trains bringing nuclear missiles to Bangor. We blocked cars at the base gate, always trying to spread the alert that these disastrous, illegal, immoral weapons must be abolished everywhere. Over the last 40 years, this work has brought me many arrests, court appearances, convictions, a few acquittals, and occasional jail time. I am a Christian pastor, a follower of Jesus. I do my best, in my small way, to walk where he would walk. Amen.*

*Dr. David Hall: We were engaged in a ritual protest, part of a 40 year effort to bring public attention to the presence and danger of nuclear weapons and to offer our prayerful hope for the future. Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a warning. Those bombs were small. A nuclear exchange today would block out the sun causing world famine and starvation of two billion people. We have worked for years to prevent this possibility, but our voices have been drowned out by the military industrial complex. We support the Treaty on Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons which many nations have signed but the US has campaigned against. We want to be able to tell our children and grandchildren that we did not go quietly.*

**Resisters... continued on page 7**

Br. Gilberto Perez: *I am a simple monk. We crossed the road to prevent the possibility of nuclear destruction. We have used nuclear weapons and seen the devastation in the past and Russia is now talking about using them. We do not want the subs at Bangor to go to war; instead we work for one happy, compassionate planet. We should all love one another.*



**Defendants Rev. Anne Hall and Dr. Dave Hall** participated via videoconference from their home. *Photo by Mary Gleysteen.*

Michael "Firefly" Siptroth: *I did stand in the roadway leading to the Trident submarine base to protest the making and preparation for use of nuclear weapons which are illegal under international law. I had an obligation under the Nuremberg Conventions to stop weapons of mass destruction. Because of the billions of dollars spent on the military in the name of national security, our government can't find the money to house the homeless. This is the greater crime. With real national security, no one in this country would be hungry or without health care and a decent place to live.*

Caroline Wildflower: *I read Hiroshima by John Hersey when I was 10 years old. It detailed the destruction of the bombing there and the vaporization of people whose shadows were left on the pavement. I have been working since then to abolish nuclear weapons. In 1975, I learned that the Trident base was being built at Bangor and that the missiles armed with nuclear weapons were equipped for specific targets making them first strike weapons. Since then I have gone onto the base to plant gardens, I spent 30 days in jail in 1977, and in 1982 in a small boat I attempted to stop the arrival of the USS Ohio, the first Trident sub at Bangor. The situation is more urgent now, with the threat of use of nuclear weapons more likely than ever before. On August 8, we went into the road way and danced commemorating the bombings of Hiroshima*

*and Nagasaki August 6, and 9, 1945. We stayed in the road because this is such an important issue.*

When all had completed their testimonies, Judge Thornburgh presented her findings:

"This is a mitigation hearing. Your eloquently stated testimony is not a defense. You have admitted the infraction and I have found that it was committed. I am reducing your fines to zero. There will be no fines."

Thank You Judge Thornburgh! And Thank You Resisters!

**Mary Gleysteen** serves on the Ground Zero Stewardship Council. She lives in Kingston. **Leonard Eiger** chairs the Communication and Outreach Committee, and sends out press releases on behalf of Ground Zero.

## Peace Pagoda Progressing Beautifully!



Currently, the forms for the elevated platform surrounding the base of the Peace Pagoda are being built. The top section will be constructed this winter, and help is welcome.

Landscape architect Dane Spencer will be traveling from Portland to assess and develop a landscaping plan this fall. Prior to the completion of the plan, a simple walkway from the carport area to the front door will be poured from concrete to enable safe entrance for folks with limited mobility.

We welcome additional help—please call Jim at (360) 271-5715 to say when you are available so we can get you plugged in to the final finishes.



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# The Summer of Bannering Continues

By Leonard Eiger

Ground Zero's Banneristas were at it again for the fifth straight summer doing some major outreach in the midst of the continuing and dangerous Ukraine nuclear crisis and the Meeting of State's Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Banneristas showed up at Seattle's NE 45th. St. Interstate 5 overpass beginning at the end of May and continued on most Fridays throughout the summer during the later afternoon traffic crush. The heavy, and often stop-and-go, traffic made it easy for drivers to receive the messages of the signs and banners reading "Abolish Nuclear Weapons" and "Nuclear Weapons Are Illegal..."



**A wave and a smile** accompany Rodney Brunelle's message of nuclear abolition, at Wahkiakum Lane over Montlake Blvd. NE. *Photo by Glen Milner.*

As in previous years, motorists were overwhelmingly positive, with honks and thumbs-up dominating their responses.

On August 19th the Banneristas showed up at the University of Washington with the large "Abolish Nuclear Weapons" banner. Ground Zero's Glen Milner interacted with both a student and a UW contractor who asked about what they were doing. Both were knowledgeable—the student was a political science major, and the contractor even knew the most vulnerable part of a launch phase for a ballistic missile. Both mentioned deterrence as a reason for nuclear weapons, but neither seemed to believe it [the validity of the concept of deterrence]. When asked if a nuclear war seemed possible in the next 100 years—the student was somewhat despondent and could not provide an answer.

Moving into Fall, Ground Zero people were at the Bangor Trident submarine base offering leaflets to drivers entering and leaving the base during early morning shift changes on both September 21st (International Day of Peace) and September 26th (International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons).

The primary leaflets handed out both days were Ground Zero's "Appeal to Navy Personnel" and the July 2022 Ground Zero Newsletter. The Appeal to Navy Personnel is directed at our brothers and sisters in the armed forces, and asks them to: "Resist illegal orders, Refuse to kill innocent civilians, and, Refuse the order to use nuclear weapons." You can see the Appeal and read the Newsletter at [gzcenter.org](http://gzcenter.org).

Chief Bannerista Rodney Brunelle shared his thoughts on the value of bannering and leafleting: "I realize that standing with a banner or handing out leaflets as a way to get our message out to citizens is old school. And yet, I think both are tried and true ways to take a public stand about something that matters. It may seem insignificant, but I love even the minimal human interaction – the waves, smiles, honking horns, encouraging gestures and especially, even the occasional eye contact."

All in all it was a worthy effort. The messages of nuclear abolition reached tens of thousands of people on the roadways, and the reaching out to, and personal contact with, base personnel is an important tradition going back to Ground Zero's humble beginnings. Our hope is that many of those who saw our messages will go further to learn about the Ban Treaty and how they can personally advocate for an end to the scourge of nuclear weapons and their threat to humanity.

The Banneristas and Leafleteers will likely be back at it next summer with their positive energy and messaging. If you see them, be sure to give them a honk and a thumbs-up!



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



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# Peace Fleet Sets Authorities Straight

Once again upholding rights to freedom of speech, and freedom from war, in Elliott Bay

By Glen Milner

Eleven Peace Fleet sailors in five boats, and twenty-five Peace demonstrators on Pier 62, met the U.S. Navy at Seafair on August 1, 2022. With the exception of a Coast Guard helicopter rescue demonstration, we were not restricted on the shore or in the water.

This year, however, we needed assistance from the ACLU and attorneys Joe Shaeffer and Braden Pence, who informed Friends of Waterfront Seattle that their planned free speech zone at the sidewalk of Pier 62 was unconstitutional. On July 28, Joe Shaeffer told Friends of Waterfront Seattle, "Pier 62 is a public park, and this event is free and open to the public," and that "Ground Zero may attend the event like any other member of the public, and may engage in free speech and expressive conduct on Pier 62."

And on July 29, the Coast Guard agreed that the 100-yard "safety zone" in front of Pier 66 during the Parade of Ships could not be extended to include Pier 62, reversing what the Coast Guard had previously announced.

2022 was the 21st year for the Peace Fleet in Elliott Bay and the first year back for the Navy after two years of the COVID pandemic. Navy Fleet Week organizers were clearly trying to reset Navy public relations with the newly reopened Seattle park at Pier 62—full of Navy recruiters, Navy band, and Navy video displays and games. A question for the future use of downtown Seattle parks is whether military

recruitment and armed Navy police should be allowed in Seattle waterfront parks.

Throughout the afternoon, peace demonstrators with signs, flags and leaflets mingled with military personnel. On the pier, we awarded a young child with the Peace Fleet Lifetime Achievement Award. Hannah had been at the Peace Fleet event for every year of her entire life—all five years!

Many thanks to Peace Fleet demonstrators on the shore with WWFOR, Veterans for Peace, Pax Christi, Lake Forest Park for Peace and Ground Zero. I wish we had the names of all who attended—this year we really needed the support and we got it. Marti Schmidt served as our on-shore contact with City and Navy officials.

Peace Fleet sailors included: Mark Barabasz, Craig Jacobson, and Rodney Brunelle in kayaks; Salaha Warsi-Brighton and Ed Brighton on a 20-foot sailboat; and Kathy Railsback, Caroline Wildflower, Rod Gleysteen, Mary Gleysteen, Dirk Gleysteen, and Glen Milner on a 24-foot sailboat.

The next scheduled date for the Peace Fleet is Monday, July 31, 2023.



**The USS John Paul Jones** takes the final turn in the Seattle waterfront. The Peace Fleet boat was one of five peace vessels on the water, operated by Ed Brighton with Veterans for Peace, with first mate Salaha Warsi-Brighton. This was the 21st year that peace activists in Elliott Bay have demonstrated for peace during Seafair. *Photo by Glen Milner.*

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

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## Looking for Poems About Peace and Nuclear Abolition

By Larry Kerschner

At the [NO TO WAR, NO TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS!](#) gathering held August 7 and 8 at Ground Zero, I was honored to lead a poetry workshop for those attending. The idea was to encourage writing poems related to nuclear abolition which could then be sent to governmental officials. I suggested also sending copies of the poems to me at [peacepoet@gmail.com](mailto:peacepoet@gmail.com). If enough poems are collected we can produce a chapbook. So far, I have received five poems from the workshop and expect more.

I would also like to have poems related to nuclear abolition and related issues from other members of the Ground Zero family to be included in a possible booklet. If you send me a poem include a two to three line biographical statement.

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*Larry Kerschner is a poet and activist. His poems and books can be found at [www.livejournal.com/~larrywrites](http://www.livejournal.com/~larrywrites) and [www.peacepoetpoetry.com](http://www.peacepoetpoetry.com).*

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# “Now is the Time”

Speech given at the Seattle Rally for Nuclear Abolition, Sept. 24

By Tom Rogers

Thank you. It's an honor to be here.

I had a 32-year career in the navy as a submarine officer. When I commanded a nuclear submarine, I was directly responsible for nuclear weapons. I understand that nuclear weapons are an existential threat to humanity. If I fail to oppose a national security strategy based on the threat of nuclear annihilation, then I am complicit.

So, I've been a member of Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action for about 20 years. I'm often surprised that local people don't know about Ground Zero.

So, a short history lesson: the term “ground zero” first appeared in the Webster dictionary in 1946. It was defined as “the aim point of a nuclear weapon detonation”. In 1977 Jim Douglass and a group of young activists, some of whom are here today, purchased land next to the Bangor Weapons Depot, about 20 miles from here. They established Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, a place of peace. Of course, the Weapons Depot was the future site of the Trident Submarine Base and Strategic Weapons Facility Pacific. If we fail to eliminate nuclear weapons, that sacred place will be “ground zero” of the last war on planet Earth.

According to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, there are over 12,500 nuclear warheads in the world today. The US and Russia account for over 11,400.

Closer to home, the Bulletin estimates there are about 1300 warheads based right next to Ground Zero. Excluding the US and Russia, that's more warheads than the rest of the nuclear weapons states combined. Proximity to those weapons motivates me to do this work!

At the height of the Cold War in the late 80's there were over 70,000 warheads in the world. 80% of those warheads are gone. But since 2010 reductions have been very modest.

Friends, we are here today to call on our government to aggressively reduce our nuclear stockpiles with

a goal of complete nuclear weapons elimination. This is a simple process.

I'll break it down for you. Currently the U.S. has about 2000 intact retired warheads in bunkers awaiting dismantling. It's time to accelerate efforts to dismantle warheads. Retired warheads are low hanging fruit. They can be dismantled unilaterally, dramatically reducing the U.S. stockpile by nearly 40% with no change in our government's national security strategy. Russia has a comparable number and could do the same.

Last year we came perilously close to allowing the New START Treaty to expire. That's the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty – the key word is Reduction. New START is the one treaty that limits the number of deployed warheads that the U.S. and Russia can maintain. “Deployed” means the warheads are mated to ballistic missiles or collocated with bombers ready to launch. New START was scheduled to expire on February 5, 2021, just 2 weeks after the start of the Biden administration. The Trump administration opposed extending the existing treaty and failed to negotiate a new treaty. I commend the Biden administration and the Russian government for managing to extend the treaty, only 2 days before it expired! It's now



**Young Tom Rogers**, then a Naval Officer, helms the periscope in a submarine, in 1980. *Photo courtesy of Tom Rogers.*

in force until 2026.

Why is that important? Without New START there would be no limit on the numbers of deployed warheads. The inspections and notifications conducted by both sides to enforce the treaty would have ceased.

Currently New START limits the number of deployed warheads in ballistic missile submarines, land-based missile silos, and strategic bombers to 1550.

But New START does not limit the number of warheads that are held in reserve. There are reserve warheads stored in bunkers at the Strategic Weapons Facility in Bangor 20 miles from here, and at the Kings Bay, Georgia Facility, at a Minuteman base in Wyoming, and at bomber bases in the Midwest. There are actually more reserve warheads than deployed warheads. Those re-

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**“Now is the Time”... continued on page 11**



serve warheads could be loaded on existing ballistic missiles and bombers. There should be no doubt that the U.S. Strategic Command has a plan to rapidly deploy those warheads if New START fails.

Now is the time to call on our government to renegotiate New START with Russia. We should demand that the new treaty provide for a transition that results in a level playing field with Russia, China and the other six nuclear weapons states as a basis for future negotiations leading to total elimination of nuclear weapons.

First, the treaty must reduce the number of deployed warheads to a minimum deterrent, a level that still provides an adequate deterrent strategy. Several government and nongovernment studies have concluded that numbers of warheads between 300 and 1000 are credible. Other metrics, like warhead yields and numbers of launchers mostly account for the range. But 500 of the types of warheads currently deployed is a good number. As deployed warheads are reduced, the number of launchers must also be reduced. That means many silos, submarines, and bombers must be decommissioned.

Next, the treaty must limit the number of non-deployed or reserve warheads. This part is necessary to provide some flexibility for temporary storage of warheads during maintenance. 150 warheads is a reasonable number.

Next, the treaty must continue enforcement through intrusive on-site inspections, open skies agreements, and notifications of weapons movements and tests.

And finally, the treaty must provide for verification of warhead dismantling and launcher decommissioning.

We recognize that the war in Ukraine complicates bilateral negotiations with Russia, but it is vital that they move forward. We call on the Biden State Department to do this now and not pass this important work to the next administration.

We also call on the Biden administration to enter into similar bilateral negotiations with China to stem its plans for nuclear weapons expansion during a period of U.S. reductions.

Decommissioning and dismantling warheads and launchers under the Next New START would lower U.S. and Russian stockpiles to about 650 warheads each. During this process the total stockpiles of the other seven nuclear weapons states combined will remain around 1,000 warheads.

This is a manageable number to enter the final phase. At this level or close to it, multilateral negotia-



**The United Nations** recognizes September 26 as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Established in 2013, the day calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations to prohibit the possession, development, production, acquisition and testing of nuclear weapons. *Photo courtesy of the United Nations Foundation.*

tions among all nine nuclear weapons states under the terms of Article 6 of the Nonproliferation Treaty can finally reach fruition. With a plan for complete elimination of nuclear weapons under strict and effective international control, all nine nuclear weapons states and their allies can then enter into the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Cooperative verifications work; the U.S. and Russia have conducted hundreds of intrusive inspections and thousands of notifications to verify deployed launchers and warheads under New START and other treaties. Similar inspections under the control of the United Nations can and will ensure compliance.

It's that simple. Imagine the total elimination of nuclear weapons! Peace is possible.



**Tom Rogers** co-chairs the Stewardship Council. The Seattle Rally for Nuclear Abolition was organized by Citizens for the Universal Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.

# GROUND ZERO

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*“[Our action at Bangor] is the  
only way we can get to the  
public to let them know the  
outrageous things being done in our  
name.”*

*— Dorli Rainey*

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## Dorli Rainey, an indomitable spirit

By Alice Zillah



Dear friend and fierce, committed activist Dorli Rainey passed away on August 12 at the age of 95. A remarkable woman, she was active with Ground Zero for many years and steadfastly devoted to the abolition of nuclear weapons. Many of us had the great pleasure of sharing a vigil, a meal, and sometimes a jail cell with Dorli. She had wise opinions about everything—and would share them with humor and love.

If you didn't know Dorli, just Google her name—you'll find a wonderful obituary for her in Seattle's *Real Change* newspaper, as well as one in the *New York Times*. There are televised interviews with *Democracy Now* and Keith Olbermann.

Dorli Rainey, presente!

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*Alice Zillah edits the Ground Zero newsletter.*