



Desert Voices

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Mercy, Manna & Memories Made

Catholic Workers Gather & Pray Halt NTS & Creech Traffic

by Mary Lou Anderson

Over the weekend of October 7th - 9th we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker (CW) which hosted an international CW gathering, "From Empire to Servitude." Partnering with the Keep Space for Peace Week, and in recognition



Signs of outrage, peace & mourning at Creech.

tion of the 10th anniversary of the US invasion of Afghanistan, the 3-day event packed in almost 200 Catholic Workers and peace activists. The day of action saw more arrests than ever before at Creech Air Force Base and more than has been seen in at least six years at the NTS. [Ed. Note: We will continue to use NTS even though the name of the Nevada Test Site is now the Nevada National Security Site so that people not aware of the name change will still know what we're talking about. -JH]

Many inspiring workshops and performances culminated in a true day of passionate action on Sunday, October 9th. Four of us who'd been to Afghanistan on peace delegations led a discussion on Friday, and we presented the participants with a memorable 'Blue Scarf' in alliance with our friends and allies, the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers (AYPV).

Ed Loring and Murphy Davis from Atlanta gave an energy and emotion-filled workshop on the "Catholic Worker Journey with Cancer, the Poor and the Executed." Ed's vivaciousness and passion coupled with Murphy's zest for grabbing the best life has to offer her, in the face of cancer, created a roundtable experience full of reminders about the fragility of life and the importance of love, commitment and compassion.

Frank Cordaro presented an amazingly charged workshop, "Community Sucks - Can't Live With Them or Without Them." The room was packed as 30 Catholic Workers shared tremendous, sometimes humorous and sad tales of the inner-workings of their Communities. My personal experience was quite profound. The amount of love and commitment to the poor in that small, personal meeting room could probably heal the world. Dorothy Day had to be shining down on us that lovely afternoon.

Action-planning for Sunday happened at a strategy session led

by Jim Haber. The demonstrators collaborated on tactics and appeals as we presented each with a 'Blue Scarf' to wear symbolizing friendship and solidarity with the AYPV. What a sight and pleasure it was to spend time with this wonderful group of committed peace activists, knowing that Sunday's vigils and demonstrations would prove to be over 100 strong - a rarity for us in Nevada!

Sunday, October 9th was a day full of charged-up peace demonstrations. The CW liturgy outside the NTS was led by Fr. Louis Vitale, currently out of jail, and Johnnie Bobb welcomed us on behalf of the Western Shoshone. The beauty and solitude of the morning was an amazing backdrop for the walk and vigil to the line. It was wonderful having over 100 people there, instead of the usual handful. We locals need visitors to emphasize that it's not just us. The Shoshone drummers intensified as over 51 peace-makers took the step over the NTS line with love and solidarity against nuclear testing and weaponry.

After a brief stop at the Sekhmet Temple for a little spiritual replenishment, we made it to Creech AFB for another compelling demonstration where chanting abounded and 18 activists were arrested for jaywalking and illegally being in the road. Once the action threatened to shut down both entrances to the base, police moved in. Interestingly, a TV crew left before the arrests took place, so instead of the story being about how the demonstrators "wanted to be arrested," the story focused on the issues: **drones kill civilians and all life is sacred, soldiers and civilians.**

Many thanks to Julia and Gary, along with John and Katie, hosting from the Las Vegas CW - the meals were blessed, healthy and satisfy-

ing and the Friday evening happy hour was a delight, coupled with over an hour of personal poetry and musical performances by extremely talented CW friends from around the country.

God bless our peace-makers; God bless the Catholic Worker movement; God bless humanity...a fabulous weekend of total immersion into our precious lives of peace activism and community. Yes, we are all truly blessed, and for that I give daily thanks.

[For press releases, media coverage and reflections by Creech18 arrestees and supporters, as well as updates as the cases move forward, check out the NDE webpage: <<http://nevadadesertexperience.org/issues/2011/creech.htm>>. Defendants will need help with legal and travel expenses, so consider making a donation today. -JH] ☸



Part of the group blocking the road into Creech. The blue scarves are part of a campaign initiated by the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers.



Kazakstan 1, United States 0

In celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the successful people's movement that forced the Soviet Union to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan, the Atomic Testing Museum (despite its pro-US testing vibe) co-hosted a delightful symposium entitled "Two Decades Without Nuclear Testing." NDE Coordinator, Jim Haber was a panelist, presenting an update on the state of nuclear weapons development in Nevada and the US. His Excellency Mr. Erlan Idrisssov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the United



States presented him with a medal (right) made in honor of Nevada-Semipalatinsk success. On the precise anniversary, Aug. 29, NDE's Megan Rice (left) and others greeted NTS traffic. Sadly, three trucks laden with nuclear waste drove by during the morning vigil. ☸

Short Report from the Occupation

by Jackie Cabasso

I spent Thursday and Friday at Freedom Plaza in Washington, DC at the Stop the Machine occupation, and I'm feeling very encouraged! For the first time in decades, people with many different issues and from many different constituencies are coming together with a common demand for system change, with a strong emphasis on nonviolence.



OccupyLasVegas is vibrant & alive

In a huge unpermitted march on Friday, from Freedom Plaza, to the Stop the Tar Sands Pipeline rally, to the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial, my favorite chant was: "The people have spoken, the government is broken." We were on our way to an "alternative dedication" and press conference at the memorial site, on the 10th anniversary of the US war in Afghanistan. Organized by United for Peace and Justice, with Veterans for Peace, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out, Afghanis for Peace, War Resisters League and others, the press conference featured moving and powerful presentations from two young Afghan women and an active-duty Marine who is seeking conscientious objector status, calling for all US troops to leave Afghanistan to make space for an indigenous nonviolent peoples movement to develop.

There were three posters: Wars are Poor Chisels for Peaceful Tomorrows, Jobs not Wars, and Abolish Nuclear Weapons Now! with the quote, "The ultimate weapons of today mean only the destruction of mankind." While the mainstream media is spinning the story claiming that the occupation movement has no clear message and no solution, this is not the case. The demands are quite clear: Create jobs and Save social services and the environment. The solutions being put forward are similarly clear: Tax the wealthy and corporations; End the wars and cut the Pentagon. The general unifying call is. "We are the 99%!" (note: this percent needs to be analyzed and refined in the coming period -- it could be more like 80-90%).

[Ed. Note: NDE members have been marching and organizing with #OccupyLasVegas. We're interested to hear how you have taken up this broad call, or if not, why not? Send some news to NDE. -JH] ☸

A Complex of Nuclear Complexes

Compiled from Our Movement Allies

We are very sad to report that Jacqueline Hudson, OP (1934-2011) passed away on August 3, 2011. Jackie was a prisoner of conscience and was incarcerated for her actions a number of times throughout her life. As reported in the last *Desert Voices*, during her recent imprisonment for acting against the Y-12 Uranium Processing Facility, her health deteriorated and she was released from prison in Ocilla, Georgia several weeks before she died. Meanwhile, the rest of the federal trespassers from the July 5, 2009 Y-12 action were given sentences of 1 to 8 months, somewhat long given their minimal breach of security.

Demonstrators at Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB) have won the right to gather in the designated protest area even if they were previously issued "ban and bar" notices by the base. The federal appeals court ruling was a long time coming and may have implications for other sites that have public easements.

Also at Vandenberg, the Minuteman III launch on July 27 was the first such intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test to fail in at least 40 years according to NDE friend, MacGregor Eddy, tracker of all things Vandenberg. A subsequent test, offensively scheduled for the International Day of Peace (Sept. 21) was postponed indefinitely. NDE, along with other groups, began a petition drive telling Pres. Obama to cancel the test. Hundreds of signatures were gathered in less than a week, and this effort will be revived whenever another ICBM test is announced.

At an August 17 hearing on the Kansas City Council anti-nuke plant measure, local residents were irate. "You cannot divorce yourselves from the hideously immoral purpose of these weapons," one declared, comparing the city's subsidy for the weapons plant to financing Nazi gas chambers "for the sake of 'jobs.'" Referring to the Council's charter, which provided for the appearance of propositions on the ballot when they secured the requisite number of signatures, the chair of PeaceWorks asked: "Are we a government of laws or of . . . corporations and special interests?"

Since then, the situation has evolved rapidly. On August 25, the City Council voted 12 to 1 to bar the proposition from the ballot. The next day, the petitioners went to court to block Council interference. Honeywell, CPZ, and their friends dispatched a large legal team to Kansas City to fight against the citizens' initiative, securing a court decision that might delay redress for years. In response, Peace Planters seems likely to speed up the process by crafting a new petition—one that would cut off city funding for the plant.

Join Nevada Desert Experience in one of our nonviolent direct actions or invite us to make a presentation or prayer-offering to your community or congregation. We are grateful for your prayers and financial contributions too! Most of our income is from individuals.

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NDE does not share our list; nor do we send lots of e-mail. E-mail is very helpful for our work though —saving money, resources, and speeding the distribution of time-sensitive news.

Nevada Desert Experience is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible. Ask us for a receipt if you need one.

☒ Check here if you don't want physical mailings from NDE.

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Enclosed is my contribution of:

☒ \$500 ☒ \$125 ☒ \$75 ☒ \$50 ☒ \$35 ☒ other _____

Want us to contact you about something specific?

☒ Sacred Peace Walk ☒ August Desert Witness ☒ Nukes

☒ Immersion or Internship ☒ Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

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Japan Activists Light the Way

Mary Lou Anderson and Jim Haber represented NDE at the Hiroshima and Nagasaki memorial events hosted there by Gensuikyo, the Japan Council Against A & H Bombs. A fuller report by Mary Lou about the lessons learned in Japan is on the NDE website, as is the statement presented by NDE at the Gensuikyo conference.

The awakening of anti-nuclear activism in Japan began in 1954 when the Bravo H-bomb test in the Bikini Atoll showered fallout on the Lucky Dragon fishing boat. The Fukushima Daichi meltdown that started this past March has awakened many Japanese to the problems of nuclear power as well as nuclear weapons. At press time, Gensuikyo has presented over 1 million signatures for an international convention against nuclear weapons to the UN. **[Photos, clockwise from**

the top: Mary Lou and Jim holding American Friends Service Committee banner for Joe Gerson, AFSC staffer from Cambridge, Mass.; Yayoi Tsuchida (in black) translating for Hibakusha at a hospital for A-bomb survivors; Jim holds a banner made by NDE'er Iris Wolfe with Japanese peace-walker Jmiu Kanagawa. Jmiu walked from Fukushima to Hiroshima and was given the banner to keep and use; The Peace Dome of Hiroshima, the Aug. 6 hypocenter, almost destroyed, symbol of the horror of war, on a lantern in front of the dome itself.] ☒



On Capitol Hill a group of lawmakers called on the congressional "super committee" to cut \$20 billion per year from efforts to modernize the nation's nuclear weapons complex. "America needs a new nuclear weapon as much as Lady Gaga needs another new outfit," Representative Edward Markey (D-Mass.) said at a news conference.

Markey, along with 64 other House Democrats, sent a letter on Oct. 11 urging the 12-member, bipartisan committee to look at a major atomic arsenal rollback, saying that the country should reduce nuclear weapons spending from \$70 billion per year to \$50 billion per year for the next 10 years.

In a bid to draw Republican votes for the New START nuclear arms control deal with Russia, the Obama administration agreed to a 10-year, \$85 billion plan to modernize U.S. nuclear research and production facilities and to maintain an aging stockpile. The Senate ratified the treaty last December. It entered into force in February. ☒





"Our problems stem from our acceptance of this filthy rotten system." -Dorothy Day

"If only the war on poverty were a real war, then we would actually be putting some money into it." -Cornel West

"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will." -Gandhi



Megan, Thank you, go thee well, and we'll be seeing you...

Megan with NDE friend & tech savior, Mario Intino.

For seven years, Sr. Megan Rice, SHCJ, came to be known as the steady and passionate face of Nevada Desert Experience. Megan came to NDE and Bartlett Ave. at the request of her Order, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, and now she has moved to Rye, New York at their request. She is needed there to assist others in her order. In September Megan and her dear friend (and NDE supporter) Pat McSweeney drove cross country, visiting friends and family and attending political and spiritual events. Megan will always connect people and issues, and her superiors have said she can continue with her peace-making efforts. She promises to return sometimes. She still has her NDE e-mail account and her cell phone is the same too. Peace on, Sister! ☸

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NTS EIS Public Comment Period Extended to Dec. 2

Thanks to the many individuals and organizations who followed up on our request to the Department of Energy for an extension of the Nevada Test Site Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) comment period. The time to submit written comments on the draft SWEIS has now been extended 5 weeks until December 2. Thank you very much for your interest in this important matter. We rarely have the opportunity to help define the future priorities of issues like nuclear and conventional weapons development and testing, alternative energy research and facility construction, and the cleanup policies of over 6 decades of deadly contamination on health and habitat. It's great that we now have an extended period to fine-tune our comments. But don't procrastinate- do it soon!

A sample letter that can be sent as is and a four page summation of concerns compiled with allies is available from the NDE website <http://nevadadesertexperience.org/issues/2011/sweis_comments.htm>. Thank you to HOME: Healing Ourselves & Mother Earth <h-o-m-e.org> for their leadership in both researching the SWEIS and promoting comments. ☸

**Photos by Jim Haber or Mary Lou Anderson
Desert Voices is produced by NDE Coordinator Jim Haber.
He likes to hear from readers.
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Regarding any upcoming actions,
contact Jim by e-mail or by phone (702)646-4814.**



**A Communal Pilgrimage to
America's Nuclear Sacrifice Zone**

**Sacred Peace
Walk**

**Las Vegas to the
Nevada National
Security Site**

April 1 to 6, 2012

**65 miles with major walking days
Sun, Mon, Tues, & Thurs.**

Part-time "Pilgrims" welcome, and there is vehicular support. This is a walking meditation, a desert healing, a political act of solidarity. It's also an opportunity for civil resistance to the development, testing, and use of new weapons systems at Creech AFB and at the NNSS, formerly the Nevada Test Site.

Sponsor a low-income walker, register to join us. Pledge forms are on the NDE website. Schedule includes: 3/31 Orientation; 4/1 Palm Sunday Service & Walk through Las Vegas; Sojourn at the Temple to Goddess Spirituality; 4/4 Vigils at Creech; Western Shoshone Sunrise Ceremonies; 4/6 Good Friday Civil Resistance at the NNSS. Devotional chanting and other spiritual and political offerings per desire and energy of walkers.

**Walk with us as we transform fears into compassion
and apathy into action!**