



Desert Voices

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Peter Ediger, Peacemaker iPresente!



Peter Ediger at this year's MLK Day Parade

Peter Ediger, director of Nevada Desert Experience in the late 1980s when thousands of people journeyed to Las Vegas and the Nevada Test Site for demonstrations against nuclear weapons tests, passed away in Las Vegas on February 16. He was 85. Continuing his work for a less violent world, Peter stayed in Las Vegas working for Peace and Nonviolence Service and remained one of the most active participants in NDE events. He was on the Board of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker and was a founding staff-member of Family Promise, a local social service organization, until his death. Peter played tennis just three weeks before he died.

As his longtime friend Fr. Louis Vitale said of Peter, "His whole life was a concern for peace, not just the nice idea of peace, but the actual practice of it." His last initiatives were to create a **Celebration of Active Nonviolence** (scheduled for Sept. 23 at the Islamic Society of Nevada) and to take a sincere query to Las Vegas churches by visiting different ones each week with a sign that read, "**Jesus said, 'Love your enemies.' What does your church say?**" He would then join them for worship.



Peter demonstrating against nuclear weapons in Moscow along with Chris Brown after their visit to Kazakhstan in 1989.

According to Louis, Peter's lifetime commitment to peace led NDE to hire him. Peter was a Mennonite minister until 1986, was very active in organizing to close the Rocky Flats nuclear plant, and he served time in a Civilian Work Camp rather than fight in World War II. The Beatitudes were of special significance for him, and Peter could always be counted on for a rousing, heart-felt song. He wrote several volumes of poetry and often knew just when and how to start an important discussion. Peter never condemned anybody. He genuinely mixed the works of mercy with his work for peace.

Even in the hospital near the end of his life, his dreams were of peace, waking up one time saying, "We gotta stop (Secretary of Defense) Leon Panetta. Leon Panetta: he's dropping bombs. We gotta stop Panetta." Maybe his prayers were felt in Washington since the rhetoric for attacking Iran softened a little. Peter's son Duane, Louis and NDE Council member Mary Lou Anderson advocated for and anchored a loving vigil with Peter once he went into the hospital less than three weeks before he died.

[Peter was my closest "reality check" since I moved to Vegas. His sage counsel and warm friendship will be sorely missed. -Jim] ♪

Missile Tests are Nuclear Threats NDE Takes Regional/Global Stance

Early in the morning on February 25, the United States Air Force test-launched a first-strike, nuclear-capable Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) despite the largest anti-test demonstrations in almost 30 years. The launch took place in the dark fog of night at 2:46 a.m. from Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB) on the central California coast, firing the missile to the other end of the Ronald Reagan Missile Range in the Marshall Islands over 4,000 miles away. Despite the military's ability to follow through with the test, the offensive nature of delivery systems and the threatening message of their test flights is growing in significance in anti-nuclear circles around the globe.



"Mourning Mother" at entrance to VAFB.

The next test-launch was scheduled for March 1, less than a week after the previous test, but was canceled abruptly on Tuesday, just as a media campaign against the test

was being launched. March 1 was the anniversary of the horrific "Castle Bravo" test of a hydrogen bomb in the Bikini atoll for which the swimwear received its name. That test dropped radioactive fallout on the people of Rongelap, leading to catastrophic health and genetic problems that continue to this day, necessitating the on-going evacuation of their island. It also sparked the Japanese



Daniel Ellsberg speaking before his arrest. Paul O'Toko of Micronesia is in the background.

anti-nuclear movement which had been prevented to exist under the U.S. occupation that followed World War II because the Lucky Dragon #5 fishing vessel, a Japanese ship, was also caught in the fallout of the March 1 test.

Daniel Ellsberg, who as a military analyst for the RAND Corporation in the 1960s developed strategic plans for the Secretary of Defense MacNamara and later leaked the lies of Vietnam war planners in what became known as the Pentagon Papers, crossed the line at the base and was taken into custody along with 14 other men and women in an act of civil resistance. "They cannot be allowed to test these lightning rods of doomsday without arresting American citizens. We need to push this. It takes public pressure through education and public protest," Ellsberg said at the rally before entering the base. Twenty-nine years ago, Ellsberg was also arrested at VAFB with hundreds of others who went into the back-country of the huge base to disrupt launch plans for another ICBM, the MX missile, which ultimately was not deployed, largely due to **continued on p.2 - Missile Tests are Nuclear Threats**



The “Peace People” contingent prior to the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. parade in Las Vegas. Neighboring groups danced to our wonderful music and energetically nodded in the affirmative to the MLK sermon excerpts we played. Celebrating King as the “Hero of Nonviolence” was a welcome addition, as were NDE’s handouts with numerous quotes of King’s that were about the need for nonviolence and a “radical revolution of values” in the United States.

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international law.

Over the last decade, a more-is-better mentality has led to increased numbers of drones, drone bases, drone pilots, and drone victims, but not much else. Drones may be effective in terms of generating body counts, but they appear to be even more successful in generating animosity and creating enemies.

The Air Force’s accident reports are replete with evidence of the flaws inherent in drone technology, and there can be little doubt that, in the future, ever more will come to light. A decade’s worth of futility suggests that drone warfare itself may already be crashing and burning, yet it seems destined that the skies will fill with drones and that the future will bring more of the same.

[...Although groups like NDE, Codepink, Voices for Creative Nonviolence, Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars, UnitedAgainstDrones, NoDronesUK, The Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, KnowDrones.com and others will continue to organize to wake people up to this growing menace. For the full article and other “Tomgrams” by Nick Turse, go to <TomDispatch.com>. -Jim] ✂

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public pressure. Ellsberg continued by stating, “No one in this country should have their hands on the destruction of the world. We can’t trust these folks with the future of humanity.”



Micronesians and Californians uniting like only people can, not missiles.

Our peace actions and civil resistance at VAFB, and at the Nevada Test Site, Y-12 Plant in Tennessee and elsewhere in the expanding nuclear “bombplex” all are part of an international effort to wake up the public and our leaders to the immorality, illegality and stupidity of maintaining nuclear capabilities. The U.S. program encourages horizontal proliferation. All nuclear weapons must be eliminated. “Theirs” are bad; ours are at least as horrific. The move to make ICBMs dual use—meaning they carry nuclear or non-nuclear warheads—further increases nuclear danger by potentially confusing adversaries into thinking they’re under nuclear attack.



Peter, Duane, Robbie, John and Katie with NDE’s signs connecting the issues for President Obama when he spoke in Las Vegas shortly after the State of the Union address. We were featured well in the local Fox (!) affiliate’s coverage of the event including the other sign which read “NO NUKES! NO FRACKING! NO WAR! NO FRACKIN’ WAR!”

Nuclear Budget Double-Speak

National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Administrator Thomas D’Agostino told a House Appropriations subcommittee, “In April 2009 in Prague, President Obama shared his vision for a world free from the threat of nuclear terrorism and united in our approach to our shared nuclear security goals. His FY13 request for NNSA is \$11.5 billion, an increase of \$536 million over the FY12 appropriation. The request reaffirms our commitment to building a 21st century nuclear security enterprise through innovative approaches to some of our greatest nuclear security challenges and key investments in our infrastructure.”

-NNSA Press Release, February 29, 2012

With about a hundred demonstrators braving the damp cold of the designated protest area outside of Vandenberg, 15 people crossed the line in an “anti-test”: David Krieger, founder of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and his wife Carolee committed their first-ever acts of civil resistance and were exhilarated by the experience. Cindy Sheehan, who’s son was killed as a soldier in Iraq and who has become an outspoken peace activist, also was cited and released. Judy Talaugon, a grandmother and descendant of the local Chumash people blessed and welcomed the protesters. Importantly, Paul O’Toko, an elder from Micronesia and founder of Indigenous Stewards International, brought a sizable group including several of his children—although they did not engage in the trespass itself. Fr. Louis Vitale, a frequent presence at VAFB and other demonstration sites said, “I would gladly give my life even to delay a missile launch.” ✂

Join & Support Nevada Desert Experience

We are grateful for your prayers and financial contributions!
Almost all of our income is from individuals, not grants.

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Find and Friend NDE on Facebook!

NDE does not share our list; nor do we send lots of e-mail, but it is very helpful for 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.

The Shoshone People of Mother Earth

Drawing and Poem by Donzie Bobb

We have been called "Indians",
"Native Americans", and "Native People"
We call ourselves "The Shoshone People"
The Shoshone People of Mother Earth.
In 2000 We started our Western Shoshone Walk and Run,
Walking and running on Mother Earth,
We pray and sing for Mother Earth,
We laugh and cry for Mother Earth,
We sing and dance for Mother Earth.

We try to tell others that Mother Earth needs ALL our help
to take care of Her (Mother Earth),
Some laugh at us and think we are crazy.
Some stop to visit,
To tell us we are doing right for what we are doing and
to stay strong,
Then there are some that join and support us on the
Western Shoshone Walk and Run.

We wake up before the morning sunrise,
We pray, sing, and dance at the morning camp fire,
We sing and pray while walking and running,
We pray and plant willows along highway 95,
We break for camp before sunset,
We tell stories laughing and crying,
At camp we rest until the next morning.

We travel all the way down to Mercury Nevada Test Site,

Feeling accomplished of reaching out to the ones we could.

WE ARE THE SHOSHONE PEOPLE OF MOTHER EARTH!!!

"The President's budget requests \$7.577 Billion for nuclear weapons activities, compared with last year's appropriated level of \$7.214 billion, an increase of more than \$363 million."

See more budget analysis by Tri-Valley Cares at <trivalleycares.org>
Who profits from nuclear weapons? See <dontbankonthebomb.com>

I want to be a NDE Friend of the Desert

Donating \$ _____ monthly or quarterly. THANK YOU!

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

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

Join the Western Shoshone Mother's Day Walk/Run, May 7 to 13

by Johnnie Bobb

I am the chief spiritual person of the Western Shoshone National Council. We are the only Western Shoshone National Council and have worked for an over all agreement which will benefit all the Western Shoshone people and not just a few. We believe in what's been put here: Earth, Air, Water and Fire that bring us food that's connected with Mother Earth. Traveling is very important to me, talking to many Natives and Non-Natives about what's going on around their areas.

Many people are working together. Some will join the Nevada Desert Experience Sacred Peace Walk and also learn more about the Western Shoshone way of life with Mother Earth during **Our Walk/Run from May 7-13**, starting 5 miles East of Tonopah and heading down US-95 to Tonopah, Beatty and Peace Camp, Mercury (across from the Nevada Test Site) in time for **Mother's Day. The Western Shoshone Walk and Run is open to all people**, Non-Natives and Natives, offering blessings to Mother Earth and singing songs along the way. Since 1987 thousands have protested on Mothers Day at the Nevada Test Site which is on Western Shoshone land according to the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley. **[Look up Julia Ward Howe to learn about the original Mother's Day Proclamation. For more on the Walk/Run, call Johnnie at 775-426-0980, or find Donzie Bobb or Jeremiah Jones on Facebook, or contact NDE. -Jim]**

To Change Our Name or Not?

NDE or NDPW? Runoff Open 'til April.

In the Summer edition of Desert Voices, readers were asked to help NDE decide on whether or not to change names. Some people want "peace" to be more explicit in our name, while other people feel the existing name is important to keep as is for the sake of historical consistency and to be easy to find as always. The initial poll evenly favored two of the proposed names: **Nevada Desert Experience** (no change) or **Nevada Desert Peace Witness**. The final decision will be made by NDE's Council at its next meeting in April. **Until then, contact us with your choice. (See NDE contact info above.)**

The Crash and Burn Future of Robot Warfare

by Nick Turse

Over the last decade, the United States has increasingly turned to drones in an effort to win its wars. The Air Force investigation files examined by TomDispatch suggest a more extensive use of drones in Iraq than has previously been reported. But in Iraq, as in Afghanistan, America's preeminent wonder weapon failed to bring the U.S. mission anywhere close to victory. Effective as the spearhead of a program to cripple al-Qaeda in Pakistan, drone warfare in that country's tribal borderlands has also alienated almost the entire population of 190 million. In other words, an estimated 2,000 suspected or identified guerrillas (as well as untold numbers of civilians) died. The populace of a key American ally grew ever more hostile and no one knows how many new militants in search of revenge the drone strikes may have created, though the numbers are believed to be significant.

Despite a decade of technological, tactical, and strategic refinements and improvements, Air Force and allied CIA personnel watching computer monitors in distant locations have continually failed to discriminate between armed combatants and innocent civilians and, as a result, the judge-jury-executioner drone assassination program is widely considered to have run afoul of

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WHAT IS REMEMBERED LIVES

NDE Offers Prayers for Peace & Healing for all Victims of War & Nuclear Hubris

- March 1: Castle Bravo H-bomb Test (1954)
- March 11: Fukushima Nuclear Melt Down (2011)
- March 19: US Invades Iraq (2003)



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RESIST NATO! Chicago, May 18-20

There are many gatherings and goings-on in Chicago throughout May. See <vcnv.org>, <2012resistanceretreat.blogspot.com> and read Brian Terrell's article at <counterpunch.org/2012/01/30/nato-g8-in-chicago>.

Test Site Tourist Outreach

Th, March 29 Tu, April 24
Greet nuclear tourists before they embark by bus, bound for

the Nevada National Security Site on one of their monthly public tours. We provide historical context and pose ethical questions for people to consider, as a supplement to the matter-of-fact, technological focus of the standard tour. **7 to 7:45 a.m. Atomic Testing Museum, 755 E. Flamingo Rd., Las Vegas.**

Desert Voices is produced by NDE Coordinator Jim Haber. Uncredited photos by Jim Haber or Mary Lou Anderson. Editorial assistance by Mary Lou. We like to hear from readers. Contact Jim at <jim@NevadaDesertExperience.org> or at the office, (702)646-4814.

30th Anniversary of 1st Lenten Desert Experience!



A Communal Pilgrimage to America's Nuclear Sacrifice Zone

It's Not too Late to Sponsor or Join NDE Sacred Peace Walk Las Vegas to the Nevada National Security Site

March 31 to April 6

Sponsor a low-income walker or register to join us. Pledge forms and background information are on the NDE website.

Schedule includes: 3/31 Orientation (optional); 4/1 Palm Sunday Service & Walk through Las Vegas; 4/4 Sojourn at the Temple to Goddess Spirituality and Vigils at Creech AFB; 4/6 Good Friday Stations of the Cross Reenactment and Civil Resistance at the Nevada Test Site; Western Shoshone Sunrise Ceremonies Throughout; 4/2, 4/3 & 4/5 are Desert Walking Days.

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

ALSO: Peace Camp Reunion, April 6 to 9 at the Peace Camp Site Contact "Peace Camp - Nevada" or Rich Sickler on Facebook

