

# Desert Voices

The Newsletter of the Nevada Desert Experience

Volume 7 #1 Spring 1994



## International Status Report

by Pamela Meidell  
Field Director

On March 16, 1994, the day after the Lenten Desert Experience, President Clinton extended the nuclear testing moratorium through Sept. 1995. By extending the moratorium, Clinton has enhanced the positive atmosphere for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) negotiations currently underway in Geneva. The U.S. is pushing for a rapid conclusion to CTBT negotiations. Meanwhile on the hill, Rep. Bilbray (D-NV) introduced on May 3 an amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill, cutting the nuclear testing budget from \$180 to \$150 million.

**Conference on Disarmament (CD):** In a meeting with a delegation of representatives of anti-nuclear groups, Mexican Ambassador to the CD, Miguel Marin-Bosch (chair of the Ad-Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban), stated that he hopes to have a treaty in hand by the end of the year. The CD concluded its first session on March 31, will begin its second session on May 16 and continue to July 1, and will start its third session on July 25, concluding on Sept. 7. Ambassador Marin-Bosch said that "if need be, we will work through the General Assembly [session in the fall] to make sure we have a treaty by the beginning of next year. The international community is committed to no testing."

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Lenten Desert Experience XIII, Mar 10-13, '94

ARTWORK BY CHRISTA OCCHIOGROSSO

## LDE XIII, Now Is The Time

by David Buer, ofm  
Nevada Director

LDE XIII was my first visit back to the desert for an NDE event since 1991. It was good to be back with some 125 others who came to Las Vegas to visit the test site, get informed, study scripture, and worship together. Many slept in the "uncomfortable inn" of their sleeping bags, in a little space, yet life stories were shared and community was formed.

We watched David Brown's new 90 minute version of **Bound By The Wind**. Ched Myers broke open the scriptures and spoke about the temptations of security, power and superiority that lead us away from God and toward the bomb. Ian Zabarte articulated well the sense of sacredness that his people, the Western Shoshone, have for Mother Earth. Their concern for all victims of nuclear testing extends from human beings to animal and

plant life as well as the earth itself. Pamela Meidell brought us up to date with current events and strategies being used by national and international disarmament groups and governments toward achieving a CTBT. We may be only months away, but we must keep focused and informed! Tim Carpenter reminded us that learning to get our message out through the media is an important part of our work to end nuclear testing. (See follow-ups on Pamela's and Tim's presentations in this issue of *Desert Voices*.)

Rufino Zaragoza, ofm and Jesse Manibusan led us in a Saturday night concert. Jesse composed a song for the gathering based on our theme, "*Now is the time, we are the ones, this is the place*" and we sang this rousing chorus several times during the weekend. At the Test Site Sunday morning, our liturgy under the desert sky and among the desert plants prepared us to "cross the line" and risk

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## At The Test Site

for "the Topless Girls of Glitter Gulch"  
by Richard Nester

If we could interview this place  
as on a talk show, what would it say:  
its benches in rows on a hillside like  
church or the front seats at a drive-in,  
its I-beams and rebar twisted like taffy,  
its dead domes and dark houses alive  
with terrible crickets,  
its bridges whose abutments abut  
nothing,  
its cables that do not seem to end in  
consequences.

We have been to the great strip show  
of the atom and come away poor,  
because that's how it is at a strip show:  
the one bright girl  
who carries all the heavy light  
alone  
and the guards  
who keep us from ourselves--  
what we crave but can't abide,  
the heart's blast  
like an oven  
even miles away.  
We stand by a hole we have made in  
the desert,  
hoping the stones will have something  
to say,  
a warning or a word of forgiveness.  
But the stones just stare.

What is it exactly we're breathing?  
Like a man shot for a political purpose  
even the air at Frenchman Flats  
seems to have vanished,  
to have meticulously  
forgotten  
along with the snakes and the gophers  
by someone given the job of forgetting  
who did it well. A dust of silence,  
which we track over the whole planet,  
covers our feet.

By Hudson Bay  
a word from my uncle's  
gun opens the far north,  
its lakes of invisible quiet.  
Then everything quickens  
into what it always is,  
a thunder of wings,  
a mountain and a valley at once.  
He has a rule worth keeping--  
never make more death  
than you can eat  
at a single sitting.

To speak is our weight, not the stone's.

## LDE XIII, continued

arrest. Eighty-nine of us were arrested,  
while the rest of our supporters prayed  
and sang until we were released from the  
holding pen an hour later. The weekend  
was food for the soul, the mind and heart.  
We each had plenty to ponder on our way  
back home humming... "*Now is the time,  
we are the ones, this is the place, walking  
the ways of peace...*"

*Our organization, in solidarity with the Western  
Shoshone Nation, Nevada Desert Experience, &  
over 135 groups, invites you to the...*

### 1994 Corpus Christi Desert Experience



*A Major Peacemaking Event  
in Las Vegas  
& at the Nevada Test Site  
June 26-30, 1994*

**Focus**—The sharing of stories to re-discover the  
wonder and love in which our universe is fashioned and  
to recognize the responsibility for life we share. CCDE  
offers an opportunity for participants to tell their resis-  
tance stories and to create together a new resistance  
story at the Nevada Test Site.

Information/Brochure—

313-822-2055  
GROUNDWORK/CCDE  
11224 Kercheval  
Detroit, MI 48214

## NDE TRANSITIONS

We are happy to welcome **David Buer**,  
ofm and **Ed Robichaud**, ofm to our staff.  
David is our new Nevada Director, and Ed  
will be working in the Las Vegas office as  
an intern. We are excited to have their  
talents, enthusiasm and Franciscan energy  
on board for NDE.

Kudos to **Julia Occhiogrosso** and  
**Gary Cavalier**, our Nevada coordinators  
these past months and many blessings on  
their June nuptials. We are very grateful for  
all their hard work!

**Jonathan Parfrey** has left NDE to  
take a job with Physicians for Social Re-  
sponsibility (PSR). His tireless efforts as  
Director of Finance & Development will be  
greatly missed.

**Jennifer Allen**, **Tim Carpenter** and  
**Bishop C. Dale White** have recently joined  
the NDE Board of Directors for three year  
terms. Welcome to each of you and thanks  
for your willingness to serve NDE in these  
necessary capacities.

## Read All About It!

by Tim Carpenter

The Nevada Desert Experience  
launched its *City Correspondence Cam-  
paign* at our March 13th gathering in Las  
Vegas with a workshop entitled, "Why  
We Can't Wait to Go Home and Spread  
the News." The workshop was organized  
to recruit NDE activists to return home  
and begin to write press releases and to  
contact local media with our call for a  
Comprehensive Test Ban. Thirty-two  
people committed themselves to work at  
the local level. Their first assignment  
when they returned home was to write a  
press release about the weekend.

As you are aware, shortly after our  
gathering President Clinton called for an  
extension of the test ban moratorium  
through 1995. Needless to say, we are  
very proud of our *City Correspondents*  
for returning home and turning up the heat  
in very short order!

*City Correspondents* are currently  
sending out press releases announcing  
house parties and updating the media about  
NDE's year-long nonviolent campaign.  
In Northern California, a media team has  
been flooding its local media with press  
releases about upcoming NDE activities.

We are excited about our *City Cor-  
respondents Campaign*. We feel this will  
be a great way to empower local activists  
while challenging the media for its lack of  
coverage on our issues. We hope to  
double the number of correspondents in  
the coming months. If you would like to  
become a *City Correspondent*, please  
give me a call at (714) 558-3329. I will  
send you a one page outline on how to  
write a press release with pointers on how  
to work with the media. In coming issues  
of *Desert Voices* we'll be profiling our  
correspondents, so please join us!

## DESERT VOICES

**Desert Voices** is the quarterly newsletter of  
the Nevada Desert Experience.

Your letters, articles, poetry or humorous pieces  
are welcome. Send them (and a stamped, self-  
addressed envelope) to: **Desert Voices**  
P.O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127-0487.  
Phone: (702) 646-4814, Fax: (702) 646-3878  
Newsletter staff: David Buer, ofm  
& Anne Symens-Bucher



# August Desert Witness X

To commemorate  
the 49th anniversary  
of Hiroshima & Nagasaki  
With Arun Gandhi,  
Richard McSorley, sj  
August 4-7, 1994

St. James Church, Corner of H St. & Washington St., Las Vegas, Nevada

Co-sponsored by Nevada Desert Experience, Fellowship of Reconciliation

Friday, August 5: All day tour of the Nevada Test Site, Dinner, Group Reflection, Night Prayer /Meditation

Saturday, August 6: Morning Prayer, briefings and small group sessions, lunch, nonviolence training, planning for Sunday ritual and action at the test site, dinner, cultural evening, optional camping at Cactus Springs.

Sunday, August 7: Gather at Mercury gate of the Nevada Test Site for ritual and action

Please clip and return to: Nevada Desert Experience, P O Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127  
Please make checks payable to Nevada Desert Experience, for more information call (702) 646-4814

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Enclosed is my pre-registration of \$50. ☐ I need housing. (☐ sleeping bag ☐ bed)

☐ I would like to register for the test site tour. We need your name (as appears on photo ID), social security number, date of birth and city and state of birth by July 3rd as required by the Department of Energy. Foreign guests must register by June 3rd. Pregnant women are discouraged from visiting the test site.

☐ I need an airport pick-up, Airline \_\_\_\_\_ Flight # \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

### International Update, continued

**July 1 - 25:** This time period between the second and third sessions of the CD will be crucial for raising public awareness and keeping the issue alive. Groups around the world will be observing July 25, the opening date of the third session, as an **International Day of Action**. A campaign is underway to collect one million signatures and present them to the CD at the beginning of the third session. Major demonstrations are already planned for Geneva and Paris. We are encouraging people to plan local events on this day, and to include this campaign in Hiroshima/Nagasaki events around the world.

**Russia:** President Boris Yelstin recently reaffirmed his commitment to continue the nuclear testing moratorium. Russian Ambassador Vladimir Petrovsky, chair of the CD, praised President Clinton's extension of the U.S. moratorium and encouraged other nuclear states to take similar steps.

**United Kingdom:** The U.K. has yet to announce a formal moratorium because they test at the Nevada Test Site and the U.S. isn't testing. They do have an influential voice in the testing negotiations and are reluctant to support a treaty at this stage.

**France:** France maintains its moratorium on testing due entirely to the presence of President Mitterand. He announced on May 5 that the moratorium will remain in effect until May 1995, when it is likely he will be defeated in the elections. Defense Minister Leotard and the conservatives have called for between ten and twenty more tests in the South Pacific so France can reach the U.S. level of computer simulation. Mitterand believes that world opinion will prevent such massive French testing.

**China:** Although China has pledged not to use a nuclear weapon first, China is not abiding by any moratorium on nuclear testing. Patricia Lewis, Director of London's Verification Technology Information Centre (VERTIC), said at the end of April that she expects at least two more tests by China by the end of 1994, the first one as early as the end of May. Ambassador Marin-Bosch believes that the test could occur at the Lop-Nor test site in Xinjiang within a few weeks.

### A Year of Nonviolence:

#### Journey of Witness & Remembrance

NDE is sponsoring monthly events between August 4, 1994 and August 9, 1995. (Please see the brochure enclosed with this newsletter for more details).

In the months of September, December and June, NDE invites you to host a meeting in your home to promote a CTB. We will provide a resource packet including organizing and media activities, and a Nuclear Age Reflection Guide. NDE will sell or rent the new version of *Bound by the Wind* for you to show at your meeting. (\$25 purchase, \$15 rental).

From May 7 - 13, 1995, NDE invites your participation in a **Walk for Peace**, a six-day journey to the test site to draw attention to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and International Citizen's Assembly occurring in New York, and raise funds for NDE's campaign. If you are interested in hosting a house meeting or participating in the **Walk for Peace**, please call our office or send the coupon from the brochure.

#### *Desert Voices*

Franciscan Friars of California  
Nevada Desert Experience  
1500 34th Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94601

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P.O. Box 4487  
Las Vegas, NV 89127



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to participate in the following  
NDE events. Please send more information.

- ☐ August Desert Witness X, 1994
- ☐ Call to the Desert, October 1994
- ☐ November 5, 1994 Concert, Phoenix
- ☐ January 27, 1995 Test Site Event
- ☐ February 18, Concert, Albuquerque
- ☐ Lenten Desert Experience XIV
- ☐ Walk for Peace, May 7 - 13, 1995
- ☐ Atomic Mirror Pilgrimage, July '95
- ☐ August Desert Witness XI, 1995
- ☐ I would like to organize a house  
meeting (Sept., Dec., June)
- ☐ I would like to purchase *Bound by  
the Wind* (new version; please enclose \$25).

Nevada Desert Experience is a faith-based organization working to end nuclear weapons testing through a campaign of prayer, dialogue and nonviolent direct action. Inspired by Franciscan spirituality and scriptural values, NDE is an inter-faith voice presently engaged in an intensive campaign to bring about a Comprehensive Test Ban.

Nevada Desert Experience invites you to join this campaign by observing *A Year of Nonviolence: Journey of Witness and Remembrance*. After years of prayer and action, momentum is building for a Comprehensive Test Ban and a renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Over the next year, this campaign will be more important than ever to help make these crucial steps toward a nuclear-free future a reality. In an effort to make peace with our past, we intend to look clearly at our nuclear history of the last 50 years, to take responsibility for what we have done and with the help and guidance of the great spiritual traditions of our planet, begin the healing of ourselves and the earth. To this end, NDE is sponsoring regular events between August 4, 1994 and August 9, 1995. In addition, NDE and Pax Christi have prepared a six-session reflection guide for the Year of Nonviolence. [To order a copy, please call the NDE office at (702) 646-4814.]

Whether by hosting a house meeting or making the journey to the test site, whether through prayer, song, education, letter-writing or direct action, we invite you to join us as we remember our nuclear history and work to cultivate a culture of peace.



# A Year of Nonviolence: Journey of Witness and

## August 4 - 7, 1994

### **August Desert Witness X**

#### *Las Vegas and Nevada Test Site*

Commemorate the 49th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Interfaith prayer, reflection, test site tour and opening of the Year of Nonviolence.

## September, 1994

### **Housemeetings**

Host a meeting in your home to promote a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. NDE will provide resource packet including organizing and media activities, and a Nuclear Age Reflection Guide. Show films *Bound by the Wind* and *One Earth, One Sky*.

## October 8 - 10, 1994

### **Call to the Desert**

#### *Las Vegas, Cactus Springs, Nevada Test Site*

Initiated by Corbin Harney, Western Shoshone Spiritual Elder, and co-sponsored by Western Shoshone National Council, NDE, and others to honor Indigenous Peoples' Day.

## November 5, 1994

### **Walk in the Ways of Peace Concert**

#### *Phoenix, Arizona*

Singer and composer Jesse Manibusan, radiation victim Claudia Peterson and NDE Field Director Pamela Meideli will provide an evening of song, entertainment and education.

## December 1994

### **Housemeetings**

Host a meeting in your home to promote a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

## January 27, 1995

### **44th Anniversary, First Nevada Test**

#### *Las Vegas and Nevada Test Site*

Morning vigil at NTS; evening program featuring former test site workers. January 26 test site tour for Las Vegas residents.

## February 1994

### **Housemeetings**

Host a meeting in your home to promote a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

## March 1 - April 16, 1995

### **Lenten Desert Experience XIV**

#### *Las Vegas and Nevada Test Site*

Forty days of witness and reflection. Special events for Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday (April 13 - 16). Weekly seminars on nonviolence.