

Desert Voices

The Newsletter of the Nevada Desert Experience

Volume 7 #2 Summer 1994



August Desert Witness X

Nevada Desert Experience launched the opening of its "*Year of Nonviolence*" with the August Desert Witness X. This was the first of NDE's monthly events throughout the year; which will culminate with ADW XI in 1995. Please see the enclosed brochure for more information.

Despite the heat, many came to the desert to commemorate the 49th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The speakers for this event were *Arun Gandhi* (Mohandes K. Gandhi's grandson) and *Richard McSorley, SJ* (priest and peace professor at Georgetown University). They were joined by *Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb*, who led us in many touching, interfaith rituals, and *Tai Sheridan*, an organizational facilitator and a member of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

On Friday, people had an opportunity to tour the Nevada Test Site that was sponsored by the Department of Energy. Later that night, Tai Sheridan, led us in a debriefing of the experience. A lot of people felt anger towards what they saw. For many, the emotions felt were too much to put into words; yet we all knew those feelings.

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Please Post

Year of Nonviolence Brochure enclosed

On Saturday morning, one of the things Arun Gandhi spoke about was anger. He said that anger was a good and necessary thing. However, it must be channeled correctly, otherwise it could destroy oneself or others. He continued to share with us some of the lessons and importance of nonviolence he learned from his grandfather, and how these lessons still live in him and his family. It was inspirational to have him speak, and know that the spirit of his grandfather continues in Arun and his work.

Richard McSorley spoke next about the need for a definite separation of church and state. As long as the church continues to support the state, there will be a continued support for militarism and nuclear armament. He challenges that the church should renounce their tax exempt status (a benefit from the state) in order to be able to challenge the violence of the state.

On Sunday morning, there was an interfaith ritual at the gates of Mercury. We prayed in remembrance of all those who were killed by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we prayed for all those who were, and continue to be, affected by nuclear waste, we prayed for the downwinders of Utah, and around the world, *we prayed to stop the madness!*

To continue our witness, 40 people went through an opening of the barbed wire fence—trespassing on "restricted land" and risked arrest. We joined hands across the fence and to the tone of a Buddhist bell we processed together in prayer and song for peace.

by Christy Hogan

Come and Join us for Lenten Desert Experience XIV

March 1 through April 16, 1995
Ash Wednesday to Easter

NDE is sponsoring a constant Vigil and presence at the Nevada Test Site during Lent. Come for two days or for two weeks.

Special events for Holy Week and Easter Sunday are being planned.

Call the Las Vegas office at (702) 646-4814 to let us know what dates you plan to join us during this vigil.



A Year of Nonviolence:
Journey
of
Witness & Remembrance

NDE, PAX CHRISTI, AND
FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION
COLLABORATE EFFORTS FOR
A YEAR OF NONVIOLENCE
IN THE
50TH YEAR OF THE NUCLEAR AGE

On August 6, 1994 during our annual August Desert Witness, the Nevada Desert Experience along with Pax Christi USA and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) launched the Year of Nonviolence. This event was sandwiched in between the FOR's national conference in Louisville, KY July 16, the anniversary of the trinity test and the August 12-14 Pax Christi USA national assembly in San Jose, CA where 300 people signed the pledge for nuclear abolition and took a one-year vow of nonviolence. Pamela Meidell, Field Director for NDE, was a presenter at each of these events.

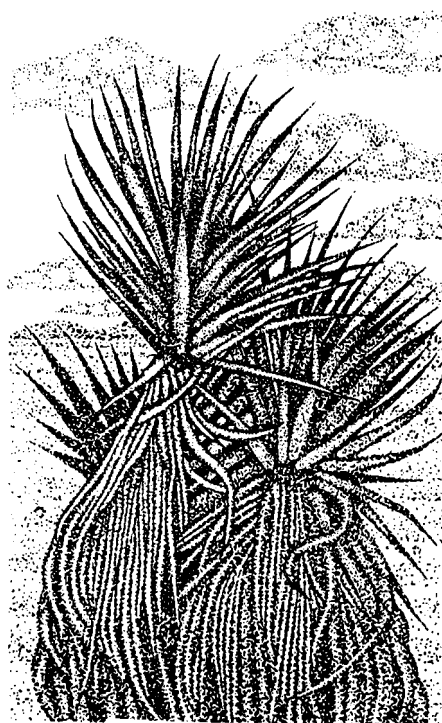
During the upcoming year, we will look together at the continuum of violence in our societies, from random drive-by shootings and gang violence to massive conventional arms trades to a world still bristling with nuclear weapons. We will provide tools that will help us become knowledgeable about our communities (both local and global), and inspire us to take action to provide for our common security by taking care of human needs.

We believe that people of faith, religious and spiritual leaders, and religious institutions have a unique role to play in making these concerns conscious and in activating peoples consciousness. We believe we can choose a world free of nuclear weapons and nuclear fear, a world where children can grow up with hope in the future. We invite you to join us as we walk through this year together.

by Pamela Meidell

Dr. Linus Pauling Anti-Nuclear Activist, Nobel Prize Laureate, Dies

Linus Pauling, untiring advocate for an end to nuclear testing, crusader for Vitamin C and the only lone winner of two Nobel prizes, died in Big Sur, CA on Friday, August 19 at the age of 93. He won his first Nobel in 1954 in chemistry and his second in 1962, for peace. We at NDE remember Dr. Pauling for his unfailing efforts to bring to the world's attention the dangers of nuclear war, and to do everything in his power to end nuclear weapons explosions. One of his best known efforts was his petition to the United Nations in 1958, calling for an end to nuclear weapons tests, signed by 11,000 scientists around the world. (eds. note: Dr. Pauling is interviewed in the "Bound By the Wind" documentary video) He was awarded his second Nobel prize, in recognition of this work. As we come closer to achieving a ban on all nuclear testing, let us remember this visionary crusader that paved the way for the work we do now.



Nuclear Age Reflection Guide

To assist the reflection process in this important year, *NDE and Pax Christi USA* are preparing a six-session reflection guide for small groups to examine the roots and implication of our culture of violence in the nuclear age, to reflect on the potential for entering a new era of harmony, and to take action to bring about this new reality. The guide will provide both the process for entering into the material plus actual historical material and various perspectives which can be used to view it.

Each of the six sessions will include: 1. historical/social analysis, 2. personal/cultural history, including voices of people involved in the events, 3. Biblical reflection, 4. Action.

The six sessions are: 1. *The Nuclear Story* (how we got the bomb and what we did with it), 2. *The Nuclear Club* (how other countries got the bomb and nuclear power), 3. *Cost and Consequences* (the economic, social, ecological, spiritual costs and who paid the most dearly), 4. *Glimmers of Hope* (history of resistance to nuclear weapons and the changes that occurred), 5. *Where Are We Now?* (state of the post Cold War nuclear world, treaties, and the impact of citizens movements), 6. *Where Do We Go From Here?* (visions and actions for a millennium free of weapons of mass destruction, responsible care of nuclear waste and changed concept of time).

The action component of the guide will include the creation of a picture of your community's economic ties to the nuclear cycle as well as how resources can be reallocated to provide genuine security for human needs. The guide will be available by mid-September, and can be ordered by phone or mail from our Las Vegas office.

Las Vegas Area Happenings

NDE has a new office! At the end of May, we transferred our phone, fax and other office equipment and supplies to a new office on Industrial Rd. It is about four miles from the old office by the Franciscan house on Bartlett Street. Our phone number is the same (702) 646-4814, but our fax number has changed to (702) 385-3878. We held an Open House on July 31st.

We had a successful *Corpus Christi Desert Experience* from June 26-30 with over 120 participants from around the country. On June 27, we helped pack the Department of Energy's (DOE) auditorium for Hazel O'Leary's satellite news conference about the new revelations of the government's radiation experiments. Most of the participants took the tour of the test site June 28. There were 67 arrests of mostly Catholic nuns and a few laity and men religious on June 30 at the Mercury gate of the Nevada Test Site.

On August 3rd, about 20 friends of NDE came to hear *Marina Osintseva* speak about her work in Tomsk, Russia, where there are many victims of radiation. About 15 miles north of Tomsk is Tomsk 7 where the bulk of the plutonium for the Soviet weapons program was produced. Marina is the coordinator of *Ecologicheskaya Initiative*, an organization trying to formulate citizen self-awareness about the ecological disaster around Tomsk. Tim and Penelope Eicher from Dammeron Valley, UT were Marina's host and guide during her visit in the west.

F.Y.I.

Local News around the Nevada Test Site

The Nevada Test Site (NTS) has been budgeted \$160 million for 94-95 Fiscal Year., a \$47 million cut from last year. In addition, \$40 million has been appropriated for computer simulated nuclear detonations, and \$150 million to maintain scientific expertise and readiness. Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories and other Nuclear labs will benefit from these funds. Since the last nuclear test in September 1992, the NTS has lost about 1500 jobs.

Nevada State Attorney General, Frankie Sue Del Papa, was dismayed that it took a lawsuit to force the U.S. Dept. of Energy to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement at the Test Site on low-level radioactive shipments--shipments that often are driven through the streets of Las Vegas. NDE recommends the Department Of Energy immediately halt all radioactive shipments while the study is being conducted. Call or write today. To comment on the Nevada Test Site study, call the NTS-EIS hotline at 1-800-405-1140 or 702-794-1550. Written comments may be sent to: U. S. Department of Energy, Environmental Impact Statement, P.O. Box 14459, Las Vegas, NV 89114.

After ADW X, NDE hosted its regular "Clean-up the Test Site" trash pick-up on highway U.S. 95 across from the Mercury gate by the Nevada Test Site.

In September, there will be a NDE sponsored *Housemeeting* at Bartlett Street where the new version of "Bound by the Wind" will be shown. Late breaking International news will be discussed especially concerning the discovery of smuggled plutonium in Europe and how it will effect the Nuclear Non-Proliferations Treaty. (Packets for these Housemeetings can be sent to you from our offices, please call and request one.)

Although American Peace Test disbanded in April, Heidi Carter continues the work for the *Testing Alert Network*. Heidi can be reached at their office: 914 1/2 South Fourth St., Las Vegas, NV 89101. This summer, the *Alliance of Atomic Veterans* purchased 40 acres of land seven miles west of U.S. 95 between Cactus Springs and the Mercury gate of the Test Site. One pioneer veteran has moved onto the land living in his bus until they can build some shelter there. Ian Zabarte, NDE Board Member, is in the process of moving into the house at Cactus Springs where he will work with the Western Shoshone National Council.



In August, former workers at the Secret Groom Lake Air Force Base near Las Vegas filed a lawsuit for injuries incurred by toxic fumes from illegal burning of hazardous wastes.

On July 14, another mild earthquake struck Yucca Mountain, the lone nuclear waste dump proposed by the federal government. Although this quake registered only 2.1 on the Richter Scale, there had been a 5.6 temblor in 1992 at Little Skull Mountain near the Yucca site. U.S. Representative, James Bilbray (D-Nevada), called Yucca Mountain, "the most potentially dangerous facility in the history of mankind." U.S. Senator, Richard Bryan (D-Nevada), also opposes passing laws that would allow the DOE to open a temporary nuclear dump at Yucca Mountain.

(source: *Las Vegas Sun*, August 10 - 20, 1994)

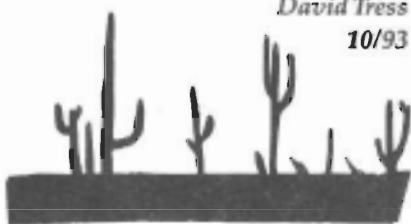
Notice to NDE Friends in Arizona:

Please join singer & composer *Jesse Manibusan*, downwinder *Claudia Peterson*, and NDE Field Director *Pamela Meidell* for a NDE benefit concert at 7:30pm on Nov. 5 at St. Mary's Basilica Social Hall in downtown Phoenix. Tickets are \$10 (\$5 student, fixed income) and may be purchased at St. Mary's office or by mail at our NDE office in Las Vegas.

To Nevada Desert Experience:
I dedicate this poem to you

*She was three
and stroked the doll's kimono
her mother had given her yesterday.
Next month she would get
the blue kimono.
Her grandfather kissed her foot's sole
Then her hand's palm,
And as he kissed her eyes
Hiroshima occurred.*

David Tress
10/93



Letters to Japan

NDE is encouraging supporters to write letters of *peace and reconciliation* to the people of Japan for the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We will collect these letters throughout the year and present them to the people of Japan on the 50th Anniversary in August 1995. Please forward these letters to NDE by July 15, 1995.

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) 385-3878. Newsletter staff: David Buer, ofm & Christy Hogan

Attention NDE Friends in the San Francisco Bay Area:

Starting in September, Bay Area Pax Christi, NDE and other peace activists groups are sponsoring weekly vigils at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories on Friday mornings. Please join us in our prayer and presence at the labs. For more information, please call Cindy Pile, Bay Area Pax Christi, (510) 832-3776.

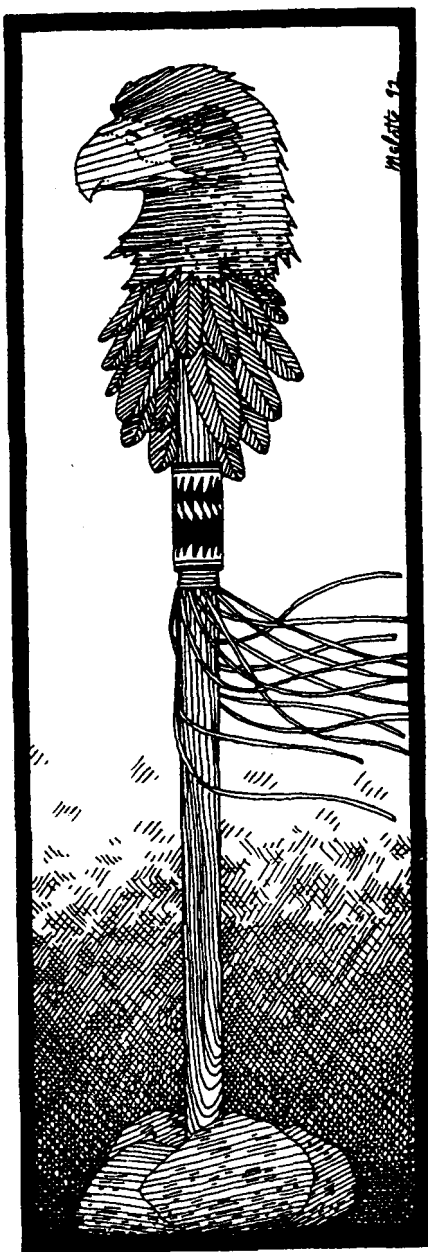
"Bound by the Wind" Video

Special offer from David L. Brown, producer of "BOUND BY THE WIND," the documentary portrait of the global human impact of nuclear weapons testing and the 50 yr. international campaign to achieve a comprehensive test ban. It has won 18 international awards and has been broadcast in six countries. This videocassette may be purchased from our Las Vegas office for \$25 (this includes postage). Please specify if you would like this 1993 edition in its original 90 min. version or in its condensed 60 min. version. It is an excellent resource for NDE house meetings.

DESERT VOICES

Nevada Desert Experience
P.O. Box 4487
Las Vegas, NV 89127

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"CALL TO THE DESERT"

**3 DAYS OF VIGIL & PRAYER
AT THE NEVADA TEST SITE
FOR HEALING OF THE EARTH & OURSELVES**

OCTOBER 8-10, 1994

- ◆ Daily Sunrise Ceremonies
- ◆ Sweatlodges for men & women
- ◆ Talking Circles for news & ideas
- ◆ Indigenous Peoples' Day: Oct. 10

Items to bring:

Preferrably natural fiber blankets for sweatlodges;
Water from home or special place for a ceremony;
Drinking water for your own group;
Food to prepare alone or communally;
Clothing and shelter for extreme hot & cold
temperatures, sun screen & hat.

**CALLED BY CORBIN HARNEY,
WESTERN SHOSHONE SPIRITUAL LEADER**

Endorsed by:

Nevada Desert Experience, Alliance of Atomic Veterans,
Nuremberg Actions, Citizen Alert
Native Youth Alliance, Citizen Alert Native American
Program

**FOR INFORMATION: NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE, PO BOX
4487, LAS VEGAS NV 89127 702-646-4814, FAX 385-3878**



Corbin Harney
Western Shoshone Spiritual Leader

International Update

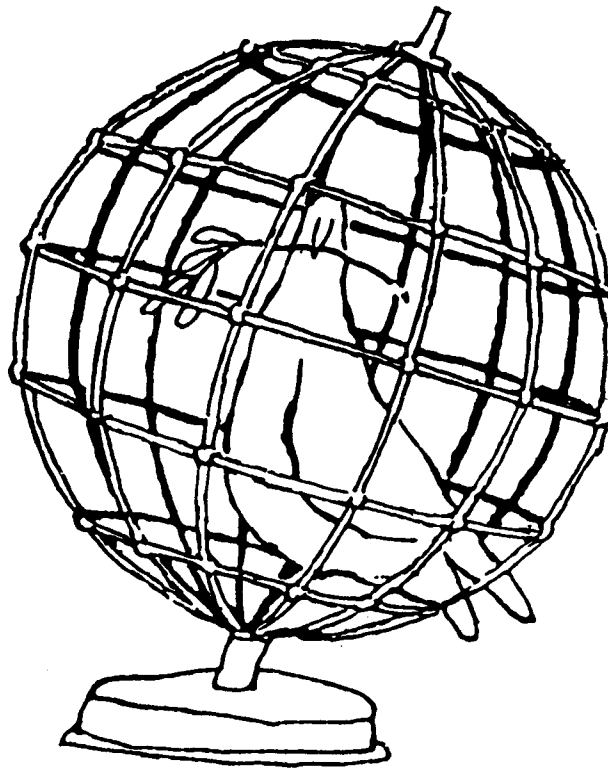
The seizure of 10.7 to 12.5 ounces of plutonium at the Munich airport in mid-August made clear to the world that the Cold War has not eliminated nuclear fears. In its editorial of Aug. 19, 1994, the Los Angeles Times stated, "A larger threat than this to international security is difficult to imagine." Although the amount seized in Munich was not enough to build a nuclear bomb, it is enough to cause cancer and death if inhaled. The birth of the nuclear age brought into our world not just nuclear bombs, which are potentially lethal, but plutonium (and other fissile materials) which are actually lethal.

So while the Conference on Disarmament is moving, more slowly than anticipated, toward a ban on nuclear weapons testing, and as we prepare for the review of the Nonproliferation Treaty next April, it is important to bear in mind just what risks we face with nuclear weapons and nuclear materials in the world. Some experts in the field thought it would take another nuclear accident involving a bomb, or perhaps the actual use of a nuclear bomb in a regional conflict before the people of the world would wake up and act to eliminate nuclear weapons from the earth. We don't have to wait for one of these catastrophic events: weapons-grade plutonium on the world's black market is catastrophe enough. So what do we do?

We continue to work for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in Geneva. Although Ambassador Miguel Marin-Bosch, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, failed to provide what is called a "rolling text" (incorporating all drafts of the treaty and additional language from working groups) thus making more remote the possibility of a treaty before the end of the year, negotiations will likely continue after the scheduled end of the third session on September 7. These "intersessional" talks hold out the dim

hope that we could have a treaty in hand by April 1995, when the Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference opens in New York. John Holum, Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, in a speech to the CD on August 4, called for these intersessional talks and reiterated President Clinton's intention to be "out front pulling" to achieve a CTBT "at the earliest possible time."

What are the hold ups? The UK



and France both insist on including language in the treaty that would allow them to test in "exceptional circumstances" (i.e. for safety and reliability). China would like to be able to conduct Peaceful Nuclear Explosions (PNEs), and would like the CTBT to ban the first use of nuclear weapons.

One of the biggest questions is hydronuclear testing, extremely low yield nuclear weapons test explosions, yielding from zero to a few pounds of fission energy. The US, UK, France, and Russia would all like to be able to conduct hydronuclear tests, but their ideas of a threshold vary: from the US

up to four pounds to the French estimate of up to 100 tons. Pentagon officials apparently thought that hydronuclear tests would be allowed under the CTBT, and were surprised when objections were raised. If the criteria of the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 are used, then all nuclear explosions at all thresholds would be banned.

We call for a limited extension of the Nonproliferation Treaty. In 1995, the Nonproliferation Treaty will be up for review after 25 years. Between now and April, we need to ask ourselves if this treaty has kept non nuclear states from acquiring nuclear weapons (horizontal proliferation), and kept nuclear states from developing and deploying more sophisticated and deadly nuclear weapons (vertical proliferation). Clearly, the answer to both of these questions is no. Yet the provisions of the treaty (in article 6) require the nuclear weapons states "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." By extending the NPT for a limited time (five years), we can

hold the nuclear weapons states to this promise and demand compliance with the treaty. We can work to have in place by the year 2000 a treaty that bans nuclear weapons. We have eliminated biological weapons and chemical weapons. Nuclear weapons must be next.

We can realize the dream of Dom Helder Camara, spoken at the Test Site in 1991, to enter the third millennium with no weapons of mass destruction, thereby freeing the world's resources to feed, clothe, house, and educate everyone on the planet.

by Pamela Meidell