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For the Sake of the Future
Family Spirit Peace Walk by Marcus Page**

**For the Sake of the Future
Conference Held in Las Vegas December 30, 2002 to January 1, 2003**

Over 50 people came to Las Vegas to greet the New Year at the conference For the Sake of the Future. Joanna and Fran Macy were the primary conductors of this retreat, helping participants look deeply at our past, present, and future and how we are all inter-related with everything that exists. Interspersed with activities looking at our connectedness were singing and dancing. Carla de Sola led several dances and Joanna Macy introduced participants to the Elm Dance. The Elm Dance is based on a song from the Baltic area, dedicated to the healing of local elm trees in that region. Dance steps for the song were developed in Germany and the dance has been used on retreats worldwide for the healing of the land, including in an area near Chernobyl in the Ukraine.

Participants took their message to downtown Las Vegas on New Year's Eve, where they danced near the Fremont Street Experience and witnessed to crowds gathering to celebrate in Las Vegas. They gathered again at St James Catholic church to warm up with soup before heading to the Nevada Test Site. Outside the entrance to the test site, the group gathered for music, prayers, reflections, New Year's resolutions, and dance, before dancing their way to the entrance of the test site. After a commissioning prayer from Johnnie Bobb, a Western Shoshone spiritual leader, a group of 34 danced across the line into the test site. By continuing in a line dance straight to the pens, the entire group of men and women made their way into the same holding area. Once inside, the dance continued, with the Elm Dance being used again on the test site grounds for the healing of the land.

New Year's Day continued with participants sharing reflections and hopes for the coming year before heading home. New Year's Day also saw a phone call from Louie Vitale, ofm. Fr. Louie was in Las Vegas, but being confined to Federal Prison at the Nellis Air Base for an action taken at the School of Americas, was unable to attend the event.

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Family Spirit Walk

by Marcus Page

From Nagasaki Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day, NDE cosponsored a Family Spirit Walk, along with Corbin Harney's Shundahai Network, the European group For Mother Earth, and Washington DC's Nuclear Information Resource Service. Compared to the annual weeklong peace walks I've taken with NDE, this Walk was an epic journey! Our mobile community was on the road for ten weeks through a variety of climates, habitats and subcultures. Our mission was simple: a walking prayer for healing from the scourge of nuclearism on the path from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) to the Nevada Test Site (NTS). We walked through lands afflicted by uranium mining and fallout from the NTS nuclear bomb program and we encountered people on the proposed transportation routes for nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain. Our multi-ethnic group walked about 20 miles per day as guests in Native America, with inspiration from Tewa, Dine' (Navajo) and Newe (Shoshone) traditions. Our group rested roughly one day per week, and we set up camp in 43 locations along the 800 mile winding route from LANL to the NTS. It is impossible to convey the intensity and power of the Family Spirit Walk in this short report, and you can read more lengthy stories on-line at www.EnergyPeace.org. To get your own taste of a nuclear abolitionist pilgrimage, you can also join NDE for the coming Holy Week Peace Walk 2003.

The idea for this journey started out with a small family deciding they would take a walk. But word quickly spread and the family expanded. The Belgian wing of For Mother Earth helped bring more Europeans along. For Mother Earth itself began ten years ago with a walk across the USA to stop nuclearism in concert with the European Peace Pilgrimage taking a different route across the states simultaneously. A few people on those first walks joined the Family Spirit Walk. We also carried the sacred forked staff which had been given to the 1992 Walk For Mother Earth (when they started in New Jersey).

We were warned at the beginning that taking a stand against the forces of domination and injustice can bring on the wrath of those who benefit from the domination system. That paradigm is so overwhelming that our actions for peace and good health don't automatically strike a chord of strong support from those who are victimized by the system. Thus, part of our prayer is to cut through the deception and false "security" that nuclearism offers.

The NTS conducted two subcritical nuclear experimental explosions when we were still in Arizona on our way to the NTS. This offense kept us mindful of our daunting task and validated our call for immediate nuclear abolition. Conversely, visiting hummingbirds and the splendor of a rainbow nearly every week confirmed the value of our prayer walk. Nature welcomed us and celebrated our cause while the perverse system of industrial nuclear science raged against nature.

We were often blessed by good supportive contact with local individuals affected by the nuclear cycle, and we received genuinely effective support from most communities along the route. The majority of responses from motorists on “Indian” lands were positive peace/victory signs and honks. The local radio, newspaper, and television coverage was good. We gave presentations about radiation, politics and spiritual-based walking in three New Mexico schools along the way, and we even were part of the Swiss Days parade near St. George Utah! At the end of the walk - the final week from Vegas to the NTS - our power was increased with the influx of new walkers. We participated in Shundahai’s Nuclear Abolition Summit while metal war birds flew over our camp, which was next to Nellis Air Force Base’s air show.

Most of the Family Spirit Walkers ended the journey by walking all the way to Mercury, NV, three miles beyond the white-line location of most ritual arrests at the NTS. For this deeper “trespassing”, Sheriffs took 22 people to Beatty, NV for prosecution. Five others, who had gone to Yucca Mountain, were also sent to Beatty to appear before the judge. The Nye County District Attorney may drop the charges for most of the accused trespassers (all of whom had rightful permission from the Western Shoshone National Council to be in Mercury and at Yucca Mountain). The DA could pick a few to prosecute. This was a confusing end to a prayer-walk when contrasted to the clarity of our purpose for two months. Our collective energy seems dispersed throughout the world, and some of us may reconvene to undergo the prosecution.

The struggle continues! As the local people often thanked us for bringing the rain with us to their lands the prayers we made truly contributed to the healing. We survived the storms, as any good family would. Despite our foibles, the Family Spirit Walk strengthened us; we remain connected, and the spiritual work for nuclear abolition must go on.

Marcus Page is an NDE board member from Gallup NM and helped organize the walk.

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