

Desert Voices

The Newsletter of Nevada Desert Experience • Volume 26, Number 3 • Summer, 2013
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Action Alert from Transform Now Plowshares

*Sr. Megan and Transform Now Plowshares
Continue Anti-Nuclear Work Behind Bars.*

Sr. Megan Rice, Greg Boertge-Obed and Michael Walli are currently in the Irwin County Detention Facility in Ocilla, GA awaiting their sentencing on September 23, 2013. The three were found guilty by a jury in Tennessee in May on two counts—Judge Amul Thapar revoked their pre-trial release saying they were technically guilty of a crime of violence and must be held. **There are two things you can do to support Michael, Megan and Greg.**

One is to send letters to them. Their addresses are the same except for their numbers:

Gregory Boertje-Obed 22090
Michael Walli 4444
Megan Rice 22100

Irwin County Detention Center
132 Cotton Drive
Ocilla, GA 31774

Make sure to include your entire return address on the outside of the envelope. No staples or paperclips can be included in your mail; no oversized envelopes. Magazines and books must be sent directly from the publisher or bookstore/Amazon. Photocopies of brief articles have been reaching them. If you include inappropriate material or fail to comply with these rules, your mail will not get through; it will be returned to you.

The second thing you can do is send a letter to Judge Thapar. We have suggested guidelines for your letter, and we are asking people to send their letter not only to the Judge, but to Bill Quigley, lawyer for Mike Walli (address below), so that later they also can be delivered to the judge en masse. Preformatted postcards that can be printed to share can be downloaded from orepa.org/support-transform-now-plowshares-write-now.

We want the judge to receive a steady stream of letters to keep
cont. on p. 2, Transform Now Plowshares (TNP)

NDE Leads Public Outcry Against Imminent Rad Waste Shipments

*Gov. Sandoval Comes Out Against CEUSP/
U233 Burial Plan After Reading NDE Letter.*



Photo: Jim Flaber

All that would remain of our weekly peace vigil if a nuclear weapon struck Las Vegas on a Thursday morning from 9 to 10 am.

ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, launched a new public outreach initiative, *Share Your Shadow*. A nuclear bomb explosion vaporizes everything in its path in a matter of moments. Such an explosion sometimes also creates permanent memories of those killed. These nuclear shadows, still visible in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, are symbols of the devastating effects of nuclear detonations. To show solidarity with victims of nuclear detonations, take a picture of your own shadow and share it with your friends and followers on Facebook, Twitter and through other channels, encouraging them to do the same.

To upload your own images or videos, go to goodbyenuk.es. You'll have to scroll down, but there's also a wonderful introductory video and a chance to sign ICAN's petition to abolish nuclear weapons. ☸

NDE was instrumental in delaying, if not stopping, the Dept. of Energy and the National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE and NNSA respectively) from bringing unusually dangerous, radioactive waste to the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS, formerly the Nevada Test Site). **Our efforts, in response to some eye-opening articles in the Las Vegas Review-Journal, put the brakes on the trucks from bringing this hot, hot cargo for shallow burial in the NNSS' Area 5.** At the last second the governor heard our cry and took a stand for Nevada rather than just rolling over on it.

“High dose rate LLW” is a dangerous oxymoron, LLW being “low level waste.” Material that can be used in an atomic bomb is classified as “special nuclear material” or SNM and has particular procedures for its disposal. This U233 has been declared not SNM by the NNSA, and that has the governor and Rep. Dina Titus and Sen. Harry Reid all in opposition. Even officials from Nye County aren't happy, trying to ensure that the trucks don't go through Pahrump.

This waste needs to be secured where it is until a real long-term solution is created so it isn't trans-

ported any more than is absolutely necessary. Recent changes in waste classification regulations seem intended to open the door for more volume, and more types of waste, being shipped to the NNSS. That is a major concern of state politicians which NDE shares. It isn't clear if this is a backdoor way to sidestep the successful resistance to opening the Yucca Mountain Waste Repository, but it certainly begs the question.

Since the U233 can be used to make nuclear weapons, it should be treated as “special nuclear material” rather than being excused from the higher safeguards mandated for waste that is thusly classified. The material needs special containers, must be moved by

cont. on p. 2, No CEUSP/U233

this on his mind so we have created postcards you can print on card stock, share with friends and mail. The text can be used as a guide or you can simply use the cards or just copy the text. (See below.)

• Invite Judge Thapar to think about sentencing in light of the fact that this was an act of nonviolent civil disobedience intended to awaken the conscience of the nation, and no evidence was presented that it was an act of terrorism meant to harm anyone. You could write that you share the court's concern that Congress would write a law that wouldn't allow a judge to distinguish between peace activists and terrorists, and are disturbed that the government defines the crime they stand convicted of as a violent "crime of terrorism."

• Without making it the focus of the letter, you could mention that the action was carried out with the clear understanding of the illegality and immorality of nuclear weapons, and intent to uphold higher laws. Read some of Ramsey Clark's testimony at a pre-trial hearing re: the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and international law: <transformnowplowshares.wordpress.com>.

• Encourage him to consider downward departures from the high guidelines for the charges, and to use his discretion at sentencing to bring more

justice into the situation by recognizing that the defendants are NOT violent terrorists as the government has implied through its interpretation of the crime; and remind him of the intentions of the three nonviolent activists: to follow the words of the prophet Isaiah to beat swords into plowshares, and build a safer and more secure world for all.

Our purpose with these letters is not to reargue the case, nor is it to condemn nuclear weapons production—the judge is not engaging those issues at this time. Our purpose is to address the legal system's distortion of the nonviolent action of the TNP resisters and to provide support to the judge for a sentencing decision that takes into account the nature of their action and their nonviolent behavior throughout their action.

Letters and cards should be sent to:

The Honorable Amul R. Thapar
United States District Court
35 West Fifth Street
Covington, KY 41011

with a copy to:
US District Judge Amul R. Thapar
c/o Professor Bill Quigley
Loyola Law Clinic and Center for Social Justice
7214 St. Charles Avenue
Campus Box 902
New Orleans, LA 70118



Photo from trial discovery material given to the TNP defense by the government prosecutors.

Follow Drones to Keep Them from Following You!

The Clark County District Attorney's office did not proceed against any of the 8 people arrested for blocking the roadway into Creech Air Force Base during the Sacred Peace Walk last March. This stands in stark contrast to how other jurisdictions seem to be dealing with demonstrators.

Over 50 pending court proceedings for nonviolent civilian resistance at Hancock Air Base, New York continue. Frequent demonstrations there also take place. <upstatedroneaction.org>

Similarly, at Beale AFB, California, vigils, blockades...and court proceedings...continue on a regular basis. <occupybealeafb.org>

NDE friend and Creech-14 member, Brian Terrell served 6 months for barely crossing the line at Whiteman AFB, Missouri and who knows what the feds will do to CODEPINKer Diane Wilson for going over the White House fence!

NDE needs a dedicated volunteer to update our drone webpage. (Any takers?) Keep up to speed at <knowdrones.org> <droneswatch.org> and for actions and legal cases from actions in the UK, <dronewars.net>. ☘

The Third Annual Boyd Public Interest Law Film Festival at UNLV

Sept 19-20. This year's theme is Economic InJustice: Global, National & Local Challenges & Opportunities. <http://law.unlv.edu/PublicInterestFilmFestival2013>

Sept. 21, 2013, International Day of Peace
2nd Annual Ediger Interfaith Celebration of Active Nonviolence

☘ It's happening. Please contact NDE for details. ☘

If you care to send a copy to OREPA they would appreciate it: <orep@earthlink.net>, or OREPA, P O Box 5743, Oak Ridge, TN 37831

And if you offer up a prayer for Sr. Megan, remember to pray that people and governments dismantle all the nuclear weapons in the world once and for all. That, after all, was the point of their action. ☘

cont. from p.1, NO CEUSP/U233

remote controlled cranes and will be transported in utter secrecy with armed guards to protect it, but since it doesn't fit in any other category, LLW it is! The NNSA prepared graphs showing the radioactive decay over the course of 10,000, 100,000 and 500,000 years showing radioactive levels for the CEUSP. Warning signs will have their job cut out for them.

NDE will continue to call for an end to all programs that make such hazardous waste. Read more about the history and preparation of the Consolidated Edison Uranium on our website. There's just no end to it...unless we, the people, make it so. ☘

Thank Gov. Sandoval for listening to us on this waste issue and demonstrating that his first priority is the safety of Nevada and the health of its land and people. To send him an e-mail, you have to go to his website <gov.nv.gov/Contact/Governor>. Let him know that you are paying attention to this issue and that you want him to inform you of developments regarding the CEUSP waste. ☘

State Capitol Building
101 N. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701
Phone: (775) 684-5670
or
Phone: (702) 486-2500
Fax: (775) 684-5683



Thank You for Supporting Nevada Desert Experience

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

Nevada Desert Experience

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Las Vegas, NV 89106

702.646.4814, Twitter: NVDesertExp

<Info@NevadaDesertExperience.org>

<NevadaDesertExperience.org>

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.

Vandenberg Launches Another ICBM Test as Protest Case Goes to US Supreme Court

Longtime Vandenberg activist and co-founder of the Guadalupe Catholic Worker, Dennis Apel, was told on June 3 by his attorney, constitutional specialist Erwin Chemerinsky, that the Supreme Court decided to hear his case, 12-1038 USA v John Dennis Apel. The case involves the easement and ban and bar issues. Vandenberg Air Force Base officials said anyone with a Ban and Bar cannot be on the easement (the property in front of the Vandenberg sign on Hwy 1). Dennis believes he can.

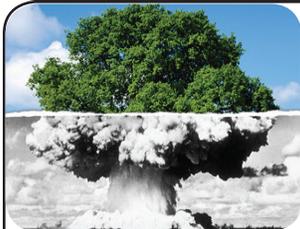
The Federal magistrate agreed with the Base as did the District Court Judge. However, the 9th Circuit Court agreed with Dennis and overturned his convictions. Now the Government is taking

Assaults on "Island of Peace" Continue in Gangjeong Village

Korean Activists Continue Phenomenal Nonviolent Campaign Despite Repression

<SaveJejuNow.org>

<facebook.com/groups/nonavalbase>



Sponsored by the Nuclear Disarmament & Redefining Security Working Group of United for Peace and Justice

August is Nuclear Free Future Month

NDE is a proud, working member of this vital UFPJ working group. Find (or create) an action near you. It's a whole month, though of course, a lot of events are organized in remembrance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Excellent background material available too. Go to <nuclearfreefuture.org>. Support UFPJ too. Visit <unitedforpeace.org>. ☸

☸ I want to be a NDE Friend of the Desert

Pledging \$ _____ monthly quarterly (circle one)

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.

Dennis to the Supreme Court to try to have those convictions re-instated. No date has been set, but Erwin believes it will be in December. We'll keep you updated, and check out the excellent background article from the Santa Barbara Independent that is linked to from <vandenbergwitness.org>.



In the meantime, the air force fired another (unarmed) missile at Kwajalein Atoll from Vandenberg on May 23, and Fr. Louis Vitale had yet another trial date postponed for one of his many incursions there. See also <wagingpeace.org> as well as NDE's website for more on actions and goings on at VAFB. ☸

NDE's John Amidon Presents

The 15 Annual Kateri Peace Conference

August 16 and 17, 2013

at the National Kateri Shrine in Fonda, New York

The Moral Imperative of Activism: What You Need to Know! What You Need to Do!

Our speakers include

Civil Resistance and Civil Disobedience - **Ellen Barfield**

Iraq 2013 Occupation and its Aftermath - **Cathy Breen**

War Destroys Law - **Stephen F. Downs**

Dorothy Day, her life and her work - **Martha Hennessy**

The Moral Imperative of Activism - **Ray McGovern**

From Protest to Prison and Back again - **Brian Terrell**

And there is a mini retreat on Friday morning led by **Rev. Chris J. Antal**

Friday evening will have a stage reading of *The Predator* by **Jack Gilroy**

No one is turned away for lack of funds.

Camping at the Shrine is fine also.

Complete information may be found at

<kateripeaceconference.org> or contact

John Amidon at 518-312-6442 <jajaja1234@aol.com>.

Dear Readers,

Working for Nevada Desert Experience is a job, but it's also a labor of love. Sadly, love alone won't keep us going. **We need your involvement and your financial support. We need to know that other Nevadans care that we're here.** In May we were very much on the edge. Fortunately, our last minute prayers were answered...for the time-being.

NDE stands pretty much alone in Nevada, organizing against nuclear weapons or drone warfare. If we hadn't been here, the trucks with the CEUSP waste would already be on their way here! (See article inside.)

NDE needs your money now, but we also need to hear from you, especially...

...if you read these newsletters but never donate or communicate with us. We can't afford to mail these to people we haven't heard from in 10 years anymore. Subscribing to the e-mail version is very helpful, and add Jim@NevadaDesertExperience.org to your address book so *Desert Voices* reaches your inbox.

...if you want to learn about nonviolent political movements, have some skills with a computer, have some interest in research and organizing, and have a little time to spend regularly in our office. There's too much work for one staffer to manage. So please, say hello. Our phone line is open: 702-646-4814. For peace sake.

Desert Voices is produced by NDE Coordinator Jim Haber. Thanks to Laura-Marie Taylor and Ming Lai for editorial assistance. We need your feedback so our work speaks to you. God's blessings upon you.

Jim

SAVE THE DATES! JOIN US!

**MARCH 7 TO 10, 2014
PACIFIC LIFE COMMUNITY
ANNUAL GATHERING AND ACTION
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA**

**APRIL 12 TO 18, 2014
NEXT YEAR'S SACRED PEACE WALK**



**Nevada Desert Experience
1420 West Bartlett Avenue
Las Vegas, NV 89106
USA**



Nonprofit Organization

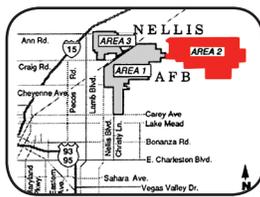
U.S. Postage
PAID
Las Vegas, NV
Permit # 1009

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

2013 August Desert Witness

This year's NDE August Desert Witness is bringing some long-overdue focus on Nellis Air Force Base in North Las Vegas.

Friday, August 9, 7:00 to 8:30 am Morning Peace Vigil



Outside the main gate to Nellis Air Force Base, Craig and Las Vegas Blvds., North Las Vegas

We will use the Nellis's Visitor Center parking lot which is outside the main gate.

CODEPINK organized a demonstration and used the parking area before. If we're asked to move, we can park at the 7-11 or other nearby businesses, but I don't expect a problem.

**NO MORE NAGASAKIS!
HALT B-61 BOMB LIFE EXTENSION!
NO NUKES NOW!
DISMANTLE THEM ALL!**

Although the government doesn't confirm or deny the presence of nuclear weapons anywhere, it is widely known that Nellis Air Force Base has bunkers that primarily store nuclear weapons. According to the Federation of American Scientists nuclear weapons expert Hans Kristensen, Nellis's Area 2 bunkers may have more nukes than any other base in the country. Most may be awaiting transfer

to Pantex, Texas to be dismantled. The B-61 bombs that are there however, may or may not be destined for that relatively positive fate.

The federal budget for nuclear weapon dismantlement has been severely decreased at the same time that funds for life extension enhancements for the B-61 continue to skyrocket. These trends fly in the face of our national obligation to lead the way towards global nuclear disarmament.

We'll also add to the tunnel art under US-95 just outside the Nevada Test Site near the historic Peace Camp area

Saturday, August 10, 7:00 am to noon Art in Action & Brunch at Goddess Temple

Join NDE and friends for a morning of art painting in the historic tunnel under US-95 just outside the Mercury entrance to the Nevada Test Site. It will be followed by a pot luck brunch at the Goddess Temple in Cactus Springs.

As you drive past the Goddess Temple en route to the test site you can leave your food and top off your water at the guest house.

NDE encourages everyone to observe a minute of silence at 8:15 a.m. on August 6, the precise anniversary of the destruction of Hiroshima by a U.S. atom bomb in 1945. What is remembered lives. ☸