



# Desert Voices

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## An Excerpt From **The Golden Rule**

By Robert Majors

A Joshua tree is watching me  
While I walk to Indian Springs  
The guard at Creech has armed his gun  
The sun is tucked under my arm

I walk for peace,  
But run for God  
To feed the bread  
the Sun has brought

I start to speak,  
but not for long  
The cops have come  
The gun is drawn

The sheriff said I need to leave  
I said I need him to believe  
That how we treat the world is wrong  
Patrolling planes and dropping bombs.

We're staring down a camera lens  
At innocent civilians  
Who traveled in the distance  
Of our invading militants

We drop the bombs when they start to pray  
Through the screen they're not the same As us  
We'll never forget  
They may choose to remember this

It seems the world's controlled by fear  
We grip our swords and raise our spears  
It won't seem to disappear  
We put our shields to our ears.

And blame it on China's bigger gear  
Like what if they fight us and we're not prepared  
Failure to plan is a plan to fail  
But why do we plan to kill

Why can't we plan to heal  
When the world has gotten ill  
Drop our swords and burn our shields  
And make love of a battlefield

We can procreate a state of mind  
That will erase the borderlines  
That separates all the kinds  
Of men that are alike inside

We will be free to reunite  
Feel not the need to hate and fight  
We will turn water into wine  
Each cup will spill the fruits of life  
Yes it starts with the golden rule  
And it ends with it too.

*Robert Majors is the Event Coordinator for NDE.*

*He is also a student at UNLV, working on a degree in Civil Engineering.*

*To see the complete poem, go to NevadaDesertExperience.org.*

## **Another Frontier of Violence?**

By Marcus Page-Collonge with letter from Rev. George Killingsworth

The Council and staff of NDE choose nonviolence as more than merely a strategy to achieve our mission. We encourage a comprehensive nonviolent modality for all human life, including police officers, warriors and civilians such as those going to work at the NNSS and Creech. Faith-based folks in our movement have been taking action for environmental justice and against the violence of governmental terrorism since 1982.

We promote nonviolent courage, and that has always included the capacity for some of us to risk our own freedom, through incarceration after prayer-actions of civil resistance. NDE takes into consideration the non-activists who will encounter us, some of whom are tasked with arresting those who perform the sacraments of civil disobedience in Nevada and Newe Sogobia.

In the latest era of saying no to weaponized killer drones and loving this bioregion to the extent of risking arrest at Creech Air Force Base, the risk has included spending a few hours in the jail system of Las Vegas, which seems increasingly violent over the years. Violence inflicted by officers representing local government can hit the peace and justice activists just as hard as the other folks locked up, especially when racism is involved, whether or not the inmates are practicing nonviolent strategies or disciplines.

Five of our Sacred Peace Walkers on April 11, 2017 did not leave the road that leads to Creech (after the final warning), so police picked them up from the road and took them to the Clark County Detention Center [CCDC]. Vera Anderson is one of the five, but she was subjected to

*It was very disheartening to see and hear the way officers blatantly disrespected individuals who were in custody.*

*—Vera Anderson*

higher levels of violence that day, as you see here in the complaint letter written by a man who witnessed the attack in the Las Vegas jail:

“I was arrested along with four other companions for our protest of crimes being planned and committed in our name at Creech Airforce Base.

“This was my second experience of being detained at CCDC and as an 81 year old retired clergy-person I have made many hundreds of visits with parishioners in jails and prisons over the years. I have no expectation of being treated gently while under arrest, but I do expect simple respect.

“You affirm the following standards in your [police department’s VALUES statement]: INTEGRITY / COURAGE / ACCOUNTABILITY / RESPECT FOR PEOPLE / EXCELLENCE.

“On April 11, I witnessed violations of all of these values ... and herein detail one particularly egregious abuse. ... I could see across the room to where I had just undergone the initial booking step. I was alarmed when I heard the cry of one of my Creech arrestee companions [Vera Anderson] and watched as her hair was roughly pulled despite her understandable supplications.

“Officer Womack and two male Officers threw my friend on the floor pummeling her and unnecessarily restraining her with their fists and knees. Then she was thrown into a restraining chair with tight chains on her ankles and wrists. She was then wheeled around a corner of the waiting room to where fewer witnessing eyes could witness the additional “processing.”

“It is worth noting that my companion who was so excessively and unnecessarily abused is African American and Officer Womack, like myself, is White. As is so routinely the case, people with my skin color receive undeserved preferential and privileged treatment. Sadly Officer Womack's violently abusive behavior illustrated that Black Lives Matter Much Less to those with unrestrained power and authority.

“Finally I was put into a final stage holding cell together with twelve other prisoners held in the jail that day. This three-hour period was the most treasured part of the day for me. Locked in the holding cell there were no guards to disrespect us, abuse us and provoke us. We shared life stories and friendships were made that have continued following discharge. One new friend literally gave me the shirt off his back. Another extremely talented holding cell friend treated us to amazing hip hop poetry and rap spoken word performance art. He has several stunning videos on YouTube and I believe he will surely make his future mark as a brilliant poet and perform-

er. None of us were or are angels ... but surely the most human interaction we enjoyed that day was during those three hours locked together in the holding cell protected from disrespectful guards.

“Everyone in the CCDC booking room that day should have been presumed innocent until proven otherwise in Court and therefore deserving of and treated with respect ... as your stated values affirm... I urge you to discipline Officer Womack and maybe even remove her from positions where she can continue her violently disgraceful and likely racist abuse... Thank you for hearing me out.”

The above letter was written by Rev. George Killingsworth and sent to Sheriff Joseph Lombardo of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police. Since that time the other four defendants, including Vera Anderson, have sent letters to LV Metro on this same subject. Metro responded with a polite letter assuring the plaintiffs that the matter is under investigation. About this traumatic experience Vera Anderson says, “I fear and feel for anyone else who comes in contact with Womack and the other Officers at the detention center... I am not a violent person and I have never been in a situation so violent in my life...It was demeaning and devaluing.” Stay

tuned to NDE’s website, or phone us at (702) 646-4814 for updates in this quest for local justice.

We at NDE recognize that the police are not our enemies; they are merely interfering with our ability to effectively communicate with the institutions of militarism and nuclearism—our true opponents. In our nonviolent methods of peace-making we attempt to “love

our enemies.” As Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr pointed out, we don’t enjoy or like abuse, we don’t have to like such people, but we do love them, which is the best policy.

In NDE’s prayer-actions at the NNSS and Creech, we know that our opponents (some would say enemies) are those who commit violent acts as part of their service to the government. Our opponents claim to be serving their country, but they are actually serving the government, which has military and nuclear forces at their disposal. Our common ground is the desire to serve and protect the people. We wish to protect the most vulnerable people, yet our opponents’ system puts everyone at risk, repressing joy and kindness while protecting the oppressors.

*Marcus Collonge is an NDE Council Member. He lives in the Sierra Nevada Mountains at a Catholic Worker Farm. Georg Killingsworth is also a Californian. He is a retired United Church of Christ pastor.*

## MAKE THE WORLD SAFE AGAIN:

- ◆ DEFUND new nuclear weapons programs.
- ◆ STOP automated and robotic (drone) weapon systems.
- ◆ ENSURE that NO nuclear weapons are on hair-trigger alert.



## **Oral History: Peace Movement in Nevada**

### *An Interview of Wendy Rogan*

*By Laura-Marie River Victor Peace*

#### **A favorite moment of Sacred Peace Walk 2017?**

There are so many! Some of the highlights for me were the vigil and nonviolent action at Creech, which I thought was very effective, and the Full Moon ceremony at the Temple of Sekmet, which was such a beautiful way to celebrate the rhythms of nature. I also appreciated the daily rituals of the SPW community, like the sunrise ceremonies led by Johnnie Bobb, Western Shoshone spiritual leader; our communal meals, [etc.]

**Remember your first peace walk? Where was it?** My first peace walk was the California Peace March in the summer of 1988, which was an offshoot of the Great Peace March that crossed the United States two years earlier... the purpose of the walk was to educate voters on peace and justice issues.

**I heard that long ago you worked for American Peace Test?** I came out to Las Vegas in the summer of 1991 to join a collective... to re-staff the office at that time. This was an exciting time to be involved, as the worldwide anti-nuclear movement was at a high point. (APT worked together with NDE as part of a coalition to plan events and coordinate outreach efforts.) There were many challenges, such as communication and outreach (no social media and no internet), and funding (always), but I learned a great deal about organizing for peace and justice and principles of effective direct action. One interesting project I helped coordinate was a Women's Speaking Tour, which included a Western Shoshone woman elder as well as a woman doctor from Kazakstan (where the former Soviet nuclear test site is located). We traveled through seven states from California to Oklahoma, speaking with college students, faith-based organizations, peace and justice groups, and Native American communities to discuss the impact of nuclear testing on indigenous peoples.

**What were the challenges and rewards?** During this time, the actions at the Test Site lasted several days and Peace Camp would become a sprawling tent city across the highway from the Nevada National Security Site (Nevada Test Site). With so many people camping in the desert, it was important to have systems in place to meet people's basic needs. We had an on-site operations council that coordinated everything from security to porta-potties. Meals were provided by Seeds of Peace, and a water tank was brought in on a truck.

There was a registration area, which served as hub for the camp, where folks would get information on the day's activities and various trainings and workshops that were offered, such as nonviolence training. Running a camp with a few thousand people in the desert was definitely a challenge! Looking back on this experience, it amazes me to think that everything needed to sustain Peace Camp was donated in some way, and all the organizing was done with volunteer support. It was very rewarding to help so many people participate in these mass actions at the Test Site.

**Why do you walk for peace?** If you are willing to make a personal sacrifice, even if it is just a small one, people are more likely to listen to your message. For me, the act of walking is restorative. Walking, especially in a natural environment, provides a space for contemplation and reflection that I cannot find anywhere else. Walking helps me create inner peace, which helps me focus on ways to create peace in the world. We need to amplify our voices for peace in the desert now more than ever.

## **Justice For Our Desert**

NDE invites you to celebrate the goodness of the desert with a Las Vegas arts festival on September 9th. There will also be an educational component. Please help us with a \$25 suggested donation to cover our costs that weekend. You can send it in with this paper.

Please send in this paper to NDE, or email the info to NDE ([info@NevadaDesertExperience.org](mailto:info@NevadaDesertExperience.org))

**1420 W Bartlett Ave, Las Vegas, NV 89106**

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**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**CounterPunch.org**  
says that

NDE is one of the Top-20  
non-profit groups working  
for justice worthy of  
national attention.

See their article on  
the “Thin Green Line:  
20 Groups Standing  
Between You and  
Doom”

**Thanks to the**  
**Southern**  
**California War Tax**  
**Resistance**  
**Committee**

For the fiscal  
grant, supporting  
the work of NDE.

### **Sacred Peace Walk Movie**

Se'amus Knight has produced a new film on  
NDE's SACRED PEACE WALK from last  
year, and will be entering it in film festivals,  
so if you CAN suggest appropriate festivals for  
this documentary, contact Caneyhead Films:  
[caneyhead@hushmail.com](mailto:caneyhead@hushmail.com)



## **SAVE THE DATES** for these

### **NUCLEAR ABOLITION and WAR-RESISTING EVENTS**

**July 12–18:** Week of Resistance to US nukes in Germany: [www.Buechel-AtomBombENFREI.de](http://www.Buechel-AtomBombENFREI.de)

**August 6-9:** Seventy-two hour International Fast for the end of nuclearism (multiple locations)

**September 9, 2017:** Justice For Our Desert (see PAGE 3 inside this newsletter)

**March 2-4, 2018:** Pacific Life Community gathering in Las Vegas, NV

**March 24-31, 2018:** Sacred Peace Walk from Las Vegas to Creech & the NNSS