

Ground Zero

October 2024

Volume 29 Issue 4



Never Again!

By Michael "Firefly" Siptroth

This year's Ground Zero Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance weekend was very meaningful, and provided long-time members, those newly exposed, and onlookers critical information about the terrible consequences of the use and the perilous threat of nuclear weapons. We were steadfast in advocating for the abolition of *all* nuclear weapons *now*, and thoughtful about strategies to achieve that long-sought goal.

On Friday, August 2 the house and grounds were set-up by a small but dedicated crew. The Nipponzan Myohoji Peace Walkers arrived to grateful acclamation on Saturday morning, August 3. Everyone gathered in a circle by the soon-to-be-completed Peace Pagoda to share stories and reflections of the Walkers and show apprecia-

tion. Following lunch, bannerng was coordinated by Mack Johnson at the Kitsap Mall. Our message was mostly warmly received by passing motorists. After that, Sean Makarin and Liz Tullai led a thought-provoking discussion on using nonviolence to abolish nuclear weapons and confront militarism, which continued over dinner and the following afternoon. Sean also coordinated the wonderful dinner by Monica's Café, which also provided food on Sunday. Long-time Ground Zero activist Tom Rawson entertained us in the evening with music and song.

Never Again... continued on page 2

On Sunday, Aug. 4 we gathered near the Trident Base fence for an Interfaith Peace Service. Meg Lumstead, Rev. Senji Kanaeda, and Sean Makarin shared inspirational readings, practices, prayers, and thoughts. Joanne Dufour of Olympia FOR antinuclear group and Maria Udalova of Students Against Nuclear Weapons presented “Nuclear Weapons 101,” a well-organized, participatory exercise.

Rosie Betz-Zall led a lively nonviolence action training. Susie Delaney presented an overview of her plan for the Monday morning nonviolent action at the main gate to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor and people rehearsed. For people not thinking about possible arrest or citation, Daniel and Nikhil from Resist US-Led War led a discussion of upcoming protests. Those contemplating arrest/citation participated in a discernment exercise facilitated by Rosie. In the evening, the Seattle Peace Chorus sang beautifully for us gathered out back (where we’d enjoyed dinner). The small and enthusiastic crowd sang along joyfully!

Very early on Monday, August 5, we ate a bit, and had our circle during which we recited the *Pledge of Nonviolence*. Then we were led by head Peacekeeper Rodney Brunelle safely to the main base gate, where we were happily joined by several additional folks. Together we vigiled, and some joined in the solemn procession



Mack Johnson, left, and Michael “Firefly” Siptroth practice and prepare before the nonviolent action. *Photo by Daniel Felde.*

George Rodkey, Rev. Gilberto Perez, Mack Johnson, and Susie Delaney were cited. The action is available to watch on Youtube at [this link](#).

Back at the Center, we had a debriefing and closing circle facilitated by Firefly. Many people reported having an emotional and empowering weekend. Our collective resolve was high to stop *all* nuclear weapons — *never again!* We remembered Ground Zero members who have died, and whose spirits caringly guide us onward. People joined in the clean-up which went very well. We are mindful that “we are the people who will stop war,” and that there’s a role for everyone to play.

Thanks to the planning committee: Firefly, Kathy, Mack, Sean, Sue A, and Susie. Special “thank you” to Barbara and Michael Hill for all the kitchen assistance and extra funds to help pay for the food! Let’s keep on moving forward together towards peace, justice for *all*, and deep caring for our earth!



Ground Zero members carried pictures of children—both those maimed by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and those whose futures we are acting to protect. *Photo by Daniel Felde.*

into the roadway with pictures of children, signs, banners, and flowers in remembrance of the victims of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

After several minutes of blocking the road, Washington State Patrol officers escorted demonstrators off to be cited for “pedestrian in roadway unlawfully.” Caroline Wildflower, Denny Duffell, Michael “Firefly” Siptroth,



Michael (Firefly) Siptroth serves on the Stewardship Council and was on the planning committee for the Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration. He can be reached at flybill2@aol.com. **Daniel Felde** took the photos on this page and the one on the cover.

Two Ground Zero Center Members Sail on Gaza-Bound Solidarity Ship *Handala*

By Elizabeth Murray

Two members of the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, Edward Digilio and Elizabeth Murray, sailed on the international solidarity ship *Handala* during its journey toward Gaza this summer.

Carrying 17 international passengers and crew from New Zealand, Spain, Canada, the United States, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Palestine, Finland, Brazil and Sweden, among others, *Handala* - originally a Norwegian fishing boat built in 1968 - embarked from Oslo, Norway on May 1, 2024 and has stopped at more than 25 ports along the European and Mediterranean coastlines all summer to raise awareness of the plight of Gaza's besieged citizens, who have been under constant bombardment since Oct. 7 and under siege for 18 years (see www.freedomflotilla.org).

Handala is named after a famous caricature of a 10-year-old refugee child created by the late Palestinian newspaper cartoonist Naji al-Ali. *Handala*, who has his back turned to the world in protest at the international community's historical indifference toward the Palestinian cause, has become the symbol of the Palestinian struggle for independence from and resistance to Israeli occupation.

Amid Israel's relentless campaign of slaughter, starvation and ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian civilian population - which mainstream media have attempted to downplay through muted or one-sided coverage - *Handala* activists have been networking with their counterparts in many seaports, distributing leaflets, and educating the public about the need for an immediate cease-fire and an end to Israel's 18-year economic blockade on the enclave, which has effectively cut it off from the world.

Since world governments are failing to exercise the political will and leadership needed to stop Israel's criminal ongoing massacres, *Handala*'s seafaring international envoys believe that it is time for citizens at the grassroots level to seize the initiative. Therefore they sail toward Gaza with a message of hope and humanity, declaring that the world's people cannot and will not tolerate the crimes being perpetrated against the people of Gaza, that the siege on Gaza must be lifted and that peace, freedom, and equality must prevail.

Handala's journey is fraught with danger. Previous Freedom Flotilla Coalition boats have been intercepted by Israeli Navy gunboats, such as the *Mavi Marmara* in 2010, during which Israeli commandos raided the ship from helicopters, beat and assaulted passengers and crew, and killed nine passengers.

Vigdis Bjorvand, a 70-year-old Norwegian passenger on the *Handala* who volunteers her culinary skills as

the ship's cook - and who traveled to the West Bank on numerous occasions to serve in peacekeeping missions in previous years - understands the risks but says she is determined to sail despite them. The injustice faced by the people of Gaza motivates her strongly, she says.



Elizabeth Murray, in keffiyeh, stands with friends and fellow activists from the peace ship *Handala*. *Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Murray.*

During its two-week port call at the Tino Rossi Harbor in Corsica's capital city Ajaccio, *Handala* generated considerable attention and interest, with the help and strong support of local organizations.

We docked for an extended time in Ajaccio — which became necessary while the boat underwent repairs to its 50-plus-year-old engine (to which Edward greatly contributed, employing his extraordinary skills as an experienced marine diesel technician and marine electrician). *Handala* activists used the time to create an information leaflet jointly with their local counterparts. Since only a small number of *Handala* activists spoke French, community activists played a strong role in distributing the leaflets and articulating *Handala*'s mission to the public; indeed, many of them turned up daily to chat with

Handala... continued on page 10

Defendants Continue Their Witness in Court

By Mary Gleysteen

Sue Ablao, Mack Johnson, Gilberto Perez, Michael “Firefly” Siptroth and Caroline Wildflower appeared before Judge Pro Tem Kyle A. Joyce in Kitsap County Traffic Court August 13, 2024, seeking mitigation of “pedestrian in the roadway” citations and fines for blocking traffic to the Trident Submarine Base on Mothers Day, May 12. (Carolee Flaten was out of town and sought mitigation by mail.)



“We must love each other or die.” The Mother’s Day defendants and supporters gathered for a photo outside of the courthouse. *Photo by Mary Gleysteen.*

Judge Joyce (who heard the 2023 Hiroshima Nagasaki cases), moved the Ground Zero defendants’ cases to the end of the calendar, precluding other defendants in the courtroom from hearing testimony about nuclear weapons in Kitsap County. However, one of those defendants, Brittany Wilson, who as a fourth-grader had Firefly Siptroth as a teacher, stayed following her case as a Ground Zero supporter!

Sue Ablao reminded the court that the use of nuclear weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki opened the Pandora’s box of genocide and mass destruction and the spending of trillions of dollars on a system that is not a deterrent but instead makes us a target and deprives us of resources desperately needed for basic necessities like food, housing, and health care. She quoted Pope Francis, saying that the possession of nuclear weapons is immoral and said that she was moved to act so that her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren can live in a world free of the threat of nuclear holocaust.

Why I was “in road unlawfully” for Ground Zero’s Mother’s Day Action

By Michael “Firefly” Siptroth

Your Honor,

Nuclear weapons are immoral, illegal, and a terrible waste of resources and human energy; therefore, I followed my conscience and the Nuremberg Principles which call on citizens to interrupt Weapons of Mass Destruction and Crimes Against Humanity from being planned and/or acted upon. I sign petitions, contact elected officials, write letters to the editor; but the United

States’ war machine keeps the nuclear arms race going to the tune of about \$100 billion yearly. The risk of nuclear war hangs over our heads every day as it has my whole life and is estimated to be more likely now than ever before. This is a stunning failure of individuals and governments to show resolve and creativity.

At the same time maternal and infant mortality in the US is among the highest in the developed world, especially for Black women and children. US child poverty was cut in half when the Child Tax Credit was applied, but since funding was removed, has shot back up. The reason is supposedly “not enough money!” Senior poverty is worse in the US than other developed nations, again we are told, “no money,” but money is never a problem when it comes to weapons of mass destruction

and military spending; now over 60% of discretionary budget. Women’s inadequate pay causes so many to live in poverty; their children as well, if they have any.

The US and other industrialized countries continue to largely ignore the Climate Catastrophe the Earth and millions of people are facing. If we put our tax money and human resources into solving the Climate Crisis, we might save our world, but “there is no money.” The proposed “upgrade” to our weapons of mass destruction, including Trident submarines and missiles, is several trillion dollars. If nuclear weapons are detonated, millions of people and other animals will die and nuclear winter is projected to cause global starvation resulting in one to three billion people dying.

I entered the road in front of Naval Base Kitsap to save lives, to try to end wars and suffering which was the original appeal of “Mother’s Day.” I honor my mother, all mothers, and our Mother Earth by demanding, “No Nuclear Weapons Ever Again!”

Michael (Firefly) Siptroth serves on the Stewardship Council and lives in Belfair, where he maintains an organic farm.

Defendants... continued on page 5

Mack Johnson introduced himself as a repeat offender and recidivist and identified Ground Zero as a part of a global movement to reduce militarism, eliminate nuclear weapons and prevent WWII. He asked the court to add to this global effort by reducing fines to 0.

Gilberto Perez spoke of his family history of military service and his decision to take a different path by not going to war. He talked about our country's genocidal history and concluded that "we must love each other or die."

Firefly Siproth told the court that nuclear weapons are immoral and illegal—citing international treaties, the US Constitution which makes those treaties binding and the Nuremberg Principle which obliges citizens to stand against illegal and immoral acts of their government. He detailed contacting elected officials, attending town halls, writing letters to the editor and other public opposition to nuclear weapons and concluded that more forceful efforts are needed in light of the danger posed by weapons that threaten mass annihilation and nuclear winter. He emphasized that the US nuclear program and military spending harms women and children particularly, depriving them of necessary health care and other services.

Caroline Wildflower spoke of the example set by Quakers on the boat, the Golden Rule, who attempted to

sail into the nuclear test zone in the Marshall Islands in 1958, saying that effort helped start demonstrations and the partial above ground test ban treaty signed in 1962 and led her to protest the arrival of the first Trident submarine at Bangor in 1982, in a little boat on Hood Canal. Caroline stated her belief that it is necessary to keep breaking the law because nothing else works.

Judge Joyce noted Ground Zero's cooperation with law enforcement and their minimal disruption of traffic. He acknowledged that the defendants were compelled by their beliefs to commit the pedestrian in the roadway infraction and reduced their fines to \$25. He declined to reduce the fine to 0 or dismiss the cases entirely, citing the social cost of holding up traffic and his fear of getting in trouble with the judicial system, but promised to consult with the presiding judge about his options in future sentencings.

Mary Gleysteen lives in Kingston where she volunteers serving homeless residents. She has worked for nuclear disarmament for over 40 years.

Ground Zero, A Class Act

By Mona Lee

My husband, Dick Burkhart, and I have been attending Ground Zero's Hiroshima-Nagasaki commemoration, the first weekend of August, for many years. In my case, it has been for many decades. I began attending long before I met Dick, and we have been together for nearly 30 years. Dick and I would hate to miss that annual event which is as important to us as family Christmas.

A friend of mine, a retired military police officer, who used to arrest Ground Zero protesters at the Gate, once told me, "Ground Zero is a Class Act." He didn't specify what he meant by that, but I think it is obvious. If you don't know what I mean, just watch the video of our protest blocking the gate at Bangor Monday, August 5 (at www.gzcenter.org). A friend of mine told me this video brought tears to her eyes.

Dick and I both attended all the events of that first weekend of August as described in Michael Siproth's article in this newsletter. But the article doesn't specifically mention what impressed us most. I believe it was on Sunday afternoon that the impressively talented Susan Delaney showed up to train us for the Monday morning protest. Obviously, Susan had given it a lot of thought.

Figuratively speaking, Susan is a choreographer who had planned a sort of dance. She began the training with an indoor presentation on a flip chart whereupon she drew a diagram of her plan. Her drawing contained circles and squares depicting us and our banners, where we would stand and how we would proceed.

Immediately after her flip chart presentation, Susan led us all out onto the lawn in front of the Ground Zero house and set us to rehearsing. She lined us up in two separate rows, some of us carrying banners, others signs. In front of the two lines, Susan placed me and Rosie Betz-zall and handed us each a bouquet of flowers. That was how it started. Then, directed by Susan we proceeded to rehearse the entire protest several times until we got it just right. No wonder it turned out to be the profound ritual that is was and which has been memorialized per the video for anyone to watch, even our progeny for time immemorial.

Class Act.... continued on page 11

Three Beautiful Souls Join the Cloud of Witnesses

Editor's note: Brenda McMillan, Dave Hall, and Kim Wahl were treasured members of the Ground Zero community for many years. We strive to carry on their legacy in our work. These three obituaries are presented as they were written by their families, and in Brenda's case, by herself.

Brenda McMillan, 1933-2024

Written by Brenda in her 75th year.

At age 23 I emigrated from England to the USA. I had planned to obtain work and earn enough to continue my travels to Australia. However, I married Frederick Mar-



tin and lived in the Los Angeles and Ventura area where my children, Peter, Timothy & Hilda were born and went to school. During these years I attended Ventura College and became active in leading hikes for the Sierra Club.

When I was 40 my husband and I divorced. As a single parent I worked a variety of jobs, real estate, boat crew, clerk, house

cleaner and eventually learned enough to become a bookkeeper.

I had been hiking and kayaking with Greg McMillan and when he decided to sail to Mexico I went with him. Gregory and I spent 9 months each year for the next four years sailing and exploring Mexican waters.

In 1989 we moved to Port Townsend. Greg and Doug Milholland and Kit built the house I live in now. Greg continued to build small boats and became an active member of the Quaker community. I joined the Food Co-op and the transit advisory committee and worked at creating a garden.

I have learned so much from Greg, my children and all my dear friends here. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

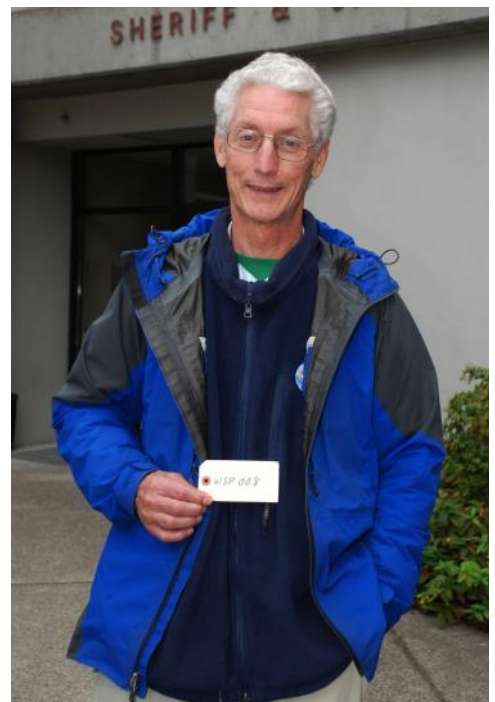
Brenda McMillan, above, at the Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration weekend sponsored by Ground Zero in 2023.

Dr. David Hall, 1946-2024

Dr. David Connolly Hall III died on August 12, 2024 at his home on Lopez Island. He was a loving husband, father, and grandfather; a wonderful friend; a healer; a writer; an athlete; and a passionately committed activist for peace.

Born April 11, 1946 in Seattle, David went east to Harvard, where he met Anne Straffin. He graduated in 1968 and they married in 1970. A conscientious objector during the Vietnam War, David was assigned to alternative service at Western State Hospital in Washington State. His work with sex offenders there convinced him he "wanted to help guys before they got into trouble," so he entered the University of Washington, first for medical school prerequisites, then completing his M.D., residency and fellowship in child psychiatry.

In 1983, David began the psychiatry practice he continued for four decades, the majority in private practice in Seattle. When Anne's career moved the couple north in 2011, David shifted his practice to Anacortes and joined Island Hospital Psychiatry and Behavioral Clinic, commuting from Lopez Island. In 2022, he retired from his practice at the hospital, pouring his wisdom into a revision of his book, *Stop Arguing and Start*



Dave Hall... continued on page 5

Understanding: Nine Steps to Solving Family Conflicts (originally published in 2001).

In 1979, David and Anne joined Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR) and set out on a lifelong journey to abolish nuclear weapons. By the mid-nineties David had moved from chapter president to the presidency of national Physicians for Social Responsibility. He served on the national PSR board for ten years, and on the WPSR board for 38 years, twice as chapter president. In 2023, WPSR conferred upon him its Lifetime Achievement award.

For forty years David and Anne have also been members of the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action and its standing protest against the nuclear-armed Trident submarines at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor on Hood Canal. They have been arrested many times in non-violent actions demanding the abolition of these weapons.

Adoring his children and grandchildren, David led the family in countless hours of skiing, hiking, boating,

building a vacation cabin, and playing all varieties of team sports.

David is survived by wife Rev. Anne Hall; son David Hall IV and daughter-in-law Kimberly Batayola of Rancho Santa Margarita, CA; son Jonathan Hall, MD and daughter-in-law Mikka Daye Hall of Kirkland, WA; grandchildren Bryce Hall, Parker Hall, Andrew Batayola, McKinley Hall, and Grayson Hall; and sisters Deborah Hall and Katherine Mann.

Gifts in David's honor may go to Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, 2524 16th Ave. S, #300, Seattle, WA 98144, or www.wpsr.org/donate.

Dr. Dave Hall, pictured on page 6, after his arrest and release in 2010 for a Ground Zero action.

Kim Wahl, 1937-2024

Kathleen "Kim" Irene Melchior Wahl passed our earth peacefully with family by her side on July 31, 2024, after a 15 year battle with ovarian cancer.

Kim was born May 22, 1937, in Evanston, Illinois. She attended Trinity, a Catholic school in River Forest. She excelled there and went on to earn her RN degree from St. Francis School of Nursing. Soon after, she met her husband, William Wahl, at a mixer during his medical residency. They married in 1959.

Stationed in Stuttgart from 1963-1966, Kim and Bill traveled throughout Western Europe. After resigning and moving to Bellevue to raise their family. Kim managed their gastroenterology practice, volunteered in the kid's schools and worked as a crisis counselor at Eastside Mental Health.

In 1985, they moved to Seattle to work with Ground Zero on nuclear weapons resistance earning Kim multiple arrests and jailtime.

Kim displayed environmental awareness, long before it was prevalent, tending an enormous garden, creating gorgeous cards from her plants, and encouraging recycling and economical uses of natural resources. She loved the rain and the beach and walked for

miles on her beloved Washington coast.

As a couple, Kim and Bill were involved in several peace and church communities helping those less fortunate. Members of Physicians for Social Responsibility, she and Bill attended medical conferences together.

A dedicated Eucharistic minister for St. Therese Parish for many years, Kim will be remembered for her magnetism, bravery, kindness, stellar memory, intellect and sense of humor. She left our earth a better place and will be remembered by everyone she touched.

She is survived by her three children, Barbara, Jeffrey and Katherine; sons-in-law, David and John; grandchildren, Jason, Matthew, Taylor, Rachel, Eli and Haydn, whom she doted on and adored and her sister, Mary. She is preceded in death by her husband Bill of 60 years; son, Stephen William; her parents, Trudy and John and her brother Mike.



Kim Wahl pictured, above, with Shelley and Jim Douglass at a White Train action in the late 1970s, and, at left, at the August 7, 2023 Ground Zero action. Kim shared her experiences resisting Trident in a wonderful interview available online, at https://depts.washington.edu/antiwar/interview_wahl.shtml.

Director Hideaki Ito Presented “Silent Fallout” at Ground Zero on August 17

By Hideaki Ito

Editor’s note: On August 17, Director Hideaki Ito came to Ground Zero with his film, “Silent Fallout,” and discussed his views on nuclear testing and nuclear weapons. Director Ito gave a speech after the event and answered questions from the audience (Ground Zero members and members of the community) for over an hour. Director Ito also discussed the challenge of getting people to look at the threat of nuclear war and to look at the harm from past and potentially new nuclear testing. A strong mutual respect was felt between the Director and film crew, and with Ground Zero members.

I’m Hideaki Ito.

I came from Ehime, Japan, which is near Hiroshima. I came to the United States to tell you a truth, which is that the US government developed nuclear weapons at the expense of American lives.

The US government conducted 101 aboveground atomic bomb testings which spread radioactive pollution throughout the American continent.

Your government was aware of it, but never informed the American people about it. And I’m sorry to inform you that everyone in this place got exposed to radiation as a result. I want you to understand that you have been a victims of nuclear bombs. I believe it is critical to understand that you have been intimately involved in the nuclear issue.

I would like you to understand that nuclear weapons were developed in exchange for your and your family’s health and lives.

Twenty years ago, I began researching Japanese tuna fishermen who had been exposed to radiation from over 100 hydrogen bomb testings in the Pacific Ocean. Tens of thousands of fisherman were irradiated as they caught tuna near testing sites. Today, most Japanese people don’t know about this catastrophic incident.

I also discovered that the nuclear testings had an impact on the American continent. The US government began nuclear testings in 1951, and completed 929 tests. There were 101 experiments conducted above ground and 828 underground testings.

However, some citizens prevented the aboveground nuclear tests. They were the women who were concerned

about the radioactive effects on their children.

If those women had not acted on the radioactive pollution, and 828 nuclear testings occurred above-ground, this country would have been too radioactive for any life form to survive. I believe those women’s activities were the most significant demonstration in the US history. Although most Americans are unaware of them, they are genuine unsung heroes. What is more essential than the life of our children? I am deeply proud of those women as a human being.

Foreign policies can be linked to cultural, economic, and even militaristic concerns. However, I believe that human lives should be prioritized above all.

The United States government created nuclear weapons in exchange for the health and lives of your people. The nuclear weapons are supposed to safeguard your country.

But, with the nuclear weapons that jeopardize your health and lives, what exactly are you protecting?

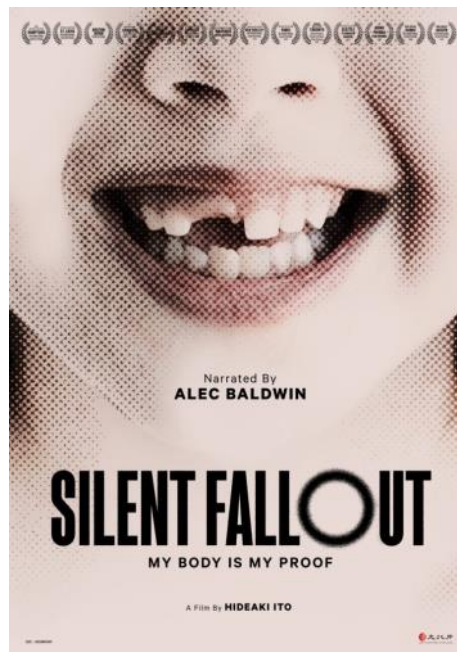
This is my question, not only to the Americans, but to all other nuclear-armed countries. I hope that everyone discusses this topic with your families and friends, in their communities, and in the US Congress.

I believe that another demonstration will take place to defend our children’s health and life, just like those mothers did on the nuclear issue 60 years ago.

I believe in miracles.

Let us protect our Earth for our children who will live in the twenty-second century. That is our duty.

Thank you.



Hideaki Ito is an acclaimed Japanese filmmaker and author. “Silent Fallout” has received international awards, winning Outstanding Achievement at the Swedish International Film Festival, Best Editing at the Maverick Film Awards (UK), and Best Story at the Toronto Documentary Feature & Short Film Festival (Canada), among other prestigious honors. For more information about the film, visit us.fallout22.com.

Boats by Bangor Sails for a Third Year

By Glen Milner

Activists staged a water-based nonviolent protest and witness for peace in Hood Canal at the Trident nuclear submarine base. Peace activists traveled along the Bangor waterfront where Trident missiles armed with thermonuclear warheads are loaded onto submarines and where submarines are resupplied for ballistic missile patrols in the Pacific Ocean.

The witness for peace at the nuclear submarine base marks the recent (79th) commemoration of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.

This is the second year since 2016 for the demonstration, called “Boats by Bangor.”

On September 4, four kayaks entered Hood Canal south of Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor at King Spit to meet the historic peace boat Golden Rule. The Golden Rule and a power boat led the flotilla to the Bangor Trident base.

The Golden Rule traveled along the entire length of the waterfront of Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, including the Delta Pier and the two Explosives Handling Wharves at Bangor where Trident submarines are maintained and nuclear warheads and Trident D-5 missiles are loaded on submarines. Participants gathered afterwards for a beach party at a nearby beach.

The peace flotilla, titled “Boats by Bangor”, featured the original peace ship, the Golden Rule, that set sail in 1958 to the South Pacific to stop nuclear bomb testing in the atmosphere. A National Project of Veterans for Peace, the Golden Rule continues to inspire many peacemakers and peace ships around the world.

The flotilla is part of a continuing effort by activists to lift the veil of secrecy involving nuclear weapons in Puget Sound.

“We are sailing for a nuclear-free world and a peaceful, sustainable future,” said Gerry Condon, former president of Veterans For Peace. “Our mission is all the more urgent now that the two nuclear superpowers, the U.S. and Russia, are confronting one another in Ukraine, and nuclear-armed Israel is carrying out a genocide in Gaza. These wars must end if we are to be spared from nuclear war.”

Hood Canal is tightly controlled by the Navy with multiple easements from State agencies that restrict ac-

cess and development near the submarine base, and with a series of federally established security zones that are enforced by Coast Guard, Navy, and Marine Corps personnel. Participants in the flotilla did not enter the federally designated exclusion zone around the Bangor waterfront.

The September 4th peace flotilla represented an unending resistance to the madness of the nuclear arms race. The first resistance on Hood Canal took place on August 12, 1982 when the first OHIO Class ballistic missile submarine, USS Ohio, entered the Hood Canal on its way to its homeport at the Bangor base. This was the end of its long journey from General Dynamics Electric Boat shipyard in Groton, Connecticut, where it was built, through the Panama Canal, and up the west coast of North America. The Ohio was the first of the new class of submarines—OHIO Class, also known as “Trident” for the new Trident submarine-launched ballistic missiles, built by Lockheed Martin Corporation, that the submarines carried in their launch tubes.

In the early morning hours a tiny peace flotilla with just two small sailboats and 20 tiny rowboats attempted to blockade the Ohio in an

act of nonviolent resistance. They were met by a massive fleet of 99 Coast Guard vessels. Coast Guard cutters rammed the sailboats, and armed Coast Guard personnel boarded the boats, pointing weapons at resisters. Ships used water cannons against the small rowboats.

Forty-six activists, knowing they were risking their lives, and could each face up to 10 years in prison and a fine up to \$10,000, participated in the attempted nonviolent blockade. Miraculously, no one was harmed that day. Many onlookers and news reporters expressed shock and astonishment at the massive and violent reaction of the Navy and Coast Guard to our small nonviolent blockade. One reporter wrote that the arrests were so volatile, with so many heavy weapons trained on protesters, that “had a firecracker gone off at a critical moment, a massacre could have resulted.”



Ground Zero activist Caroline Wildflower, left, joined the crew aboard the Golden Rule on a beautiful day in early September. *Photo by Carolee Flaten.*

Glen Milner leads legal struggles on behalf of Ground Zero. He lives in Lake Forest Park.

inquisitive tourists and locals, and succeeded in sparking curiosity, interest and enthusiasm.

One example was when Manouche - a young Paris-based artist whose grandparents grew up in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon - spontaneously expressed the desire to decorate Handala as her personal tribute to its mission. In response, Handala crew quickly set up makeshift scaffolding allowing her to be safely lowered onto a platform suspended over the side of the boat.

Securely positioned and armed with several cans of colorful spray paint, Manouche wielded her artistry over the next few hours, producing a graffiti-like work of art that spelled out "Palestine" in bold, dramatic Arabic calligraphy.

Many other people of all ages, nationalities, and backgrounds approached the boat to express support for its mission, and admiration for what they described as the courage and convictions of Handala's passengers and crew.

Others expressed disappointment at their media's one-sided coverage of the Palestinian issue, and still others remarked that openly expressing support for the Palestinian people in their countries could cause them to be socially ostracized or even to lose their livelihoods.

To be sure, the boat also had its detractors, some of whom shouted hostile threats and epithets - but they were very much in the minority, and the activists' training in nonviolence ensured that such incidents did not spin out of control.

In addition, a 24-hour watch was in place to ensure that Handala and its passengers remained secure; all activists and crew took turns keeping watch aboard the boat on a 24-hour basis.

In other activities, Handala passengers and crew joined with local solidarity organizations at several street rallies calling for a free Palestine and an end to Israel's crimes against humanity. A majority of passing cars honked in agreement, while a few drivers showed clear disapproval with their hostile expressions.

During one of the demonstrations, a Gaza-based doctor was reached directly by phone and described in detail the horrific conditions under which he had to perform his work. When informed about the Handala mission, the physician greeted the passengers warmly and expressed his support.

Handala activists were also invited to a local mosque, where they joined in evening prayers followed by dinner and socializing. Several of the passengers and crew discussed why they chose to join the Freedom Flo-

tilla mission.

Handala passengers were offered showers, homestays and above all sincere friendship and solidarity by their generous hosts, who also kept the boat supplied with gifts of fresh fruits, vegetables and other local delicacies. After two weeks of nearly daily engagement with passengers and crew, Ajaccio's activists were so taken with the Gaza mission that several have pledged to join the Freedom Flotilla as passengers next year!

In a parting gesture of generosity, the local port authority in Ajaccio waived all port fees for Handala before it departed - saving the Freedom Flotilla Coalition many hundreds of dollars, and sending an unmistakably strong signal of solidarity.

After two and one-half days of smooth sailing, Handala arrived in Messina on August 9th for a press conference and brief stopover for more technical repairs.

Once again, participants were warmly and effusively received.

While Handala later docked in Malta - where it took on new passengers and crew and readied for the final, most challenging leg of the journey - the Freedom Flotilla Coalition has decided to return the boat to the port of Messina, Sicily for an extended period while it undergoes further repairs. The mission will still go forward, but on a delayed basis.

Regardless of the final outcome, Handala's extraordinary voyage has already succeeded in energizing many hundreds of activists, generated awareness

among countless others of Gaza's plight and the need for urgent action, and emboldened many to speak out forcefully and strategize effectively to find ways to end the violence, such as boycotts, divestments and sanctions.

The people of Gaza know they are not alone, and that a boatload of love, courage and solidarity is headed their way.

Godspeed, Handala!

"People of all ages, nationalities, and backgrounds approached the boat to express support for its mission...."



Thousands of protesters rallied at the White House in July, prior to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's address to Congress. *Photo courtesy of Nathan Howard/Reuters.*

Elizabeth Murray serves on the Stewardship Council. She is a member of *Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity.*

Peace Fleet! 2024: Speech magnified

By Glen Milner

The Peace Fleet this year worked with the largest coalition of groups in the 23 years of this maritime peace demonstration at Seafair—with the largest number of peace activists on the water in Elliott Bay, and likely the



Six activist groups joined Ground Zero members to protest the “normalcy of war” that Seafair promotes. *Photo by Karol Milner.*

largest number of peace activists on the shoreline.

On July 30, we were joined with members of [BAYAN USA Seattle](#), [Malaya Movement USA Seattle](#), [Resist US-Led War Seattle](#), [International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines Seattle](#), [Veterans For Peace Daniel Ellsberg Chapter 92](#), [WPSR](#), and [350 Seattle](#). Members of these organizations were encouraged to address issues regarding U.S. militarism that were important to them. They did! It was an honor this day to be with some the brightest and most compassionate members of our community.

One reason this event was so large this year is because of the growing resistance to the Blue Angels in Seattle, with a coalition of groups called Airshow Climate Action – Seattle. Many of the peace activists at the Navy fleet arrival were also involved in protesting the Blue Angels near Lake Washington, later in the week.

Marina workers at Bell Harbor Marina were again helpful with our use of the facility as a staging area. We had so many kayaks, that we had to store them at the marina prior to the event—about 15 kayaks, and most of them were tandem kayaks.

Peace demonstrators on the shore used Pier 66 for a rally before peace kayaks were launched. Pier 62 was used in the afternoon for speakers.

The Coast Guard enforced its 100-yard no-protest zone in front of Pier 66 this year. We had no other issues with federal or local law enforcement. The Navy fleet

arrival, sponsored by Boeing, had one U.S. Navy warship.

Normally, this report includes the names of activists involved, but there was no way to record them and list them because of the larger size of the event. Still, there was a strong comradery both on the shore and on the water. There were 28 activists on the water in 15 kayaks and two power boats. Perhaps as many as 40-50 peace activists were on the shoreline.

Ground Zero members on the water included Mary Gleysteen, Dirk Gleysteen, Katharine Gleysteen, Craig Jacobson, Mark Barabasz, and Glen Milner. Marti Schmidt was our legal observer on Pier 62, along with Mary Hanson, Karol Milner, Sigrid Salo, Kathy Railsback, Mack Johnson, Mike Stuart, and many others.

Many thanks to our friends and allies. We will continue to resist the U.S. Navy/Seafair fleet arrival with our demonstration against the normalization and glorification of U.S. militarism—both in the U.S. and abroad.

Glen Milner has worked with Ground Zero since the days of White Train resistance. He lives in Lake Forest Park with his wife Karol.

Class Act... continued from page 5

Ground Zero was founded long ago by Jim and Shelly Douglass, and others, based upon their deeply held belief that nonviolent resistance is the most powerful form of resistance to evil and the most effective force for positive change. Ground Zero has been doing this now for a very long time and will keep doing this until every nuclear weapon has been relegated to the dust bin of history, until the Bangor Naval Submarine Base has been transformed into a wildlife park welcoming visitors from around the world, all stopping on the way to visit the beautiful peace pagoda being built on Ground Zero property by the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist monks from Bainbridge Island. Or . . . until nuclear weapons have won the fight and civilization no longer exists . . . but we must believe Ground Zero will win instead.

To say the least, Ground Zero is truly a “Class Act.”

Mona Lee is a member of the Stewardship Council. A former worker at Subbase Kitsap-Bangor, she resigned after touching a Trident nuclear weapon in 1982 and realizing the reality of its destructive power.

GROUND ZERO

GROUND ZERO COMMUNITY

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*“Nuclear abolition calls
for both self-
transformation and the systemic
transformation of society.”*

— Jasmine Owens,
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

It's Annual Meeting Time! November 16, 10:00am

By Carolee Flaten

Have you always wondered how you can become involved in Ground Zero?

Have you been hoping to help further our mission of resisting Trident, abolishing nuclear weapons and promoting nonviolence as a way of life? Have you been excitedly looking forward to continuing your Stewardship Council involvement? Maybe you've been wondering how you too can be on the Council?

Find out all of this and more at Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action's Annual Meeting on November 16th, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., in person at Ground Zero, 16159 Clear Creek Rd NW in Poulsbo.

(Even better, start your adventure now by attending a Monthly Ground Zero Stewardship Council Meeting, on October 19th, 11:00a.m. to 1:00p.m., at Ground Zero and also by a Zoom link.)

The Annual Meeting is when members of the Stewardship Council are selected for 2025. It is also the place to volunteer—for a Committee, event planning, work parties and more. We also discuss goals and set tentative dates for events for the coming year. We'll start with a discussion of Ground Zero bylaws along with Ground

Zero and Stewardship Council duties and responsibilities.

If you have a conflict with the Annual Meeting date but are ready to be part of spreading social justice through nonviolence in 2025 – we're here to help.

We look forward to seeing you at Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action's Annual Meeting on November 16, 2024, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on through 2025 and beyond.



Carolee Flaten is a registered nurse and Ground Zero member. She lives in Hansville, WA. Carolee can be reached at cjuneflaten@gmail.com.