

# PATHFINDER

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## Cassini Plutonium Mission Lurches into Space

By John LaForge

The on-again, off-again launch of NASA's reckless Cassini Space Probe to Saturn, carrying 72.3 pounds of deadly plutonium-238 aboard a Titan-4 rocket, was scrubbed 10 minutes before take-off Oct. 13. The list of causes was said to be high winds, computer software problems and a service gurney failure. The original Oct. 6 launch date had earlier been canceled, back in August, because of a liquid hydrogen fuel leak from the Titan rocket that occurred during a countdown test. NASA's Titan-4 has a scandalous one-in-20 failure record.

The \$3.4 billion mission to Saturn finally was sent into space Oct. 15. Even after the two failed launch attempts, the New York Times reported that Cassini "rocketed flawlessly toward Saturn today..." The Sarasota Herald-Tribune had a different view, editorializing that "The best that could be said is that we beat the odds. NASA should redouble its efforts to power these missions with solar energy." Cassini's plutonium-238 is 280 times as radioactive as weapons-grade plutonium-239. The Physicians for Social Responsibility say that a single pound of PU-238, if evenly dispersed across the planet, is enough to give a lethal dose of cancer to everybody.

On Oct. 4 about 1,000 demonstrators from around the world converged on NASA's Cape Canaveral Air Force Station to protest the mission. Twenty-seven people were arrested for trespass following a march to the base led by Grandmothers for Peace International. GPI founder and director Barbara Weidner, of Elk Grove, CA, and one of the first to be arrested, said "The strongest statement I can make is to spend some time in jail. That's why the authorities aren't threatening us with 30 days in jail any more. They're embarrassed about putting grandmothers in the slammer."

Weidner will join several Cassini resisters who will go to trial Dec. 11 in Titusville, FL, home to Cape Canaveral. On Nov. 7, Brevard County Court Judge Ken Friedland refused to exclude the resister's arguments or expert testimony in defense of their pro-



Photo by Ron Kozaryn

Lance Turner of Winter Park, FL helped other nuclear resisters over the top of the entrance gate to NASA's Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Oct. 4. Twenty-seven were arrested during the international demonstration against the Cassini Project.

test. An Assistant State Attorney had asked that any defense of justification or "competing harms" not be allowed, saying it would "outrage the jury" and "confuse the issue." The resisters intend to present evidence regarding the likelihood of a Cassini radiation disaster.

The defendants argued that blocking their testimony would effectively deny them the right to a trial by jury by placing the judge in the jury's rightful position of evaluating whether or not a defense is valid. Judge Friedland's decision to hear the evidence means that experts on radiation, cancer, NASA's history of accidents and the chances of a Cassini disaster may be evaluated by the very people who live near Cape Canaveral.

NASA still endangers most of the Earth's population because Cassini is intended to "fly by" Earth at 42,000 mph in 1999. Even a slight error in the mission's trajectory could send the plutonium into the atmosphere where it could burn up, disintegrate and be spread by the winds.

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# Fallout Patterns Kept Secret

By John LaForge

The Government, the military and their contractors kept secret what they knew about the dangers and dispersal of radioactive fallout from their above-ground bomb "testing." Researchers in Tacoma Park, MD have found more evidence that from the beginning of the nuclear age, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), and later the DOE, considered but chose not to evacuate populations they knew would be hit hard by radioactive fallout, or to even warn them of protective measures they could take on their own. However, when fallout from nuclear bomb blasts damaged commercial photographic film, the Government agreed to warn the film producers like Kodak—but not the public—about fallout locations.

Although the Government knew of the likely harm caused by the fallout, it decided to lull the public into nonchalance about radiation by issuing official declarations of its harmlessness. The reassurances were presumably made to protect the burgeoning nuclear weapons industry from liability, public outrage and from the Ban the Bomb movement.

According to the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IEER)—nuclear weapons experts who broke the Kodak story—the Air Force recommended in 1948 that, because of the continent's westerly winds, any U.S. nuclear weapons "test" site should be located on the East Coast. This advice was rejected and the deliberate result is that tens of thousands of U.S. citizens all across the country have contracted thyroid cancer and other radiation-related illnesses, especially because of the "milk pathway" by which radioactive iodine-131 is so readily transmitted to children.

The President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments found in 1995 that the AEC knew "the possibility of external beta burns is quite real," and "that those injuries would cause a public uproar that would prevent them from using test sites in the U.S." The Advisory Committee said that even after choosing the Nevada location for a test site, the Government chose never to evacuate areas likely to be hit by fallout.

While it "reassured the public that there was no health threat from atmospheric nuclear tests, the [AEC] regularly warned the Eastman Kodak Co. and other film manufacturers about [radioactive] fallout that could damage their products..." said the Sept. 30 *New York Times*.

## Project ELF

### "A Day Without the Pentagon"

Five long-time anti-war activists were arrested at the Wisconsin ELF transmitter, Oct. 25, as 50 nuclear weapons abolitionists gathered "So the Children Might Live"—the theme chosen by Duluth's Loaves and Fishes Community of the Coalition to Stop Project ELF which organized the protest. The action was also part of the War Resisters League's nationwide "Day Without the Pentagon," which saw anti-war actions in dozens of U.S. cities.

The Navy's Project ELF transmitters send one-way commands to submerged missile-firing nuclear submarines. The transmitters use Extremely Low Frequency (ELF) electromagnetic radiation because, according to the Navy, it penetrates sea water deeper than other radio frequencies.

Four of the five arrested were charged with a county trespass violation, a traffic-level offense that carries a \$175.00 fine, or—for refusing to pay—a possible five-year suspension of Wisconsin driving privileges. Those arrested were: Joel Kilgour, 20, Duluth, MN, who served two weeks in county jail for ELF resistance last Spring; Tom Bottolene, 47, Edina, MN, a founding member of the Midwest Institute for Social Transformation in Minneapolis; Bonnie Urfer, 45, Luck, WI, co-director of Nukewatch who has served more than eight months in county jail for ELF actions; Jeff Leys, 35, Madison, WI, who did two years in state prison for cutting an ELF pole in 1985; and John Heid, 42, Duluth, who likewise has served several county jail stints for refusing to pay ELF trespassing fines. Joel, Tom, Bonnie and Jeff were told to appear in court for arraignment Dec. 2, 1997 at 1:30 p.m.

John Heid, who declined to identify himself to arresting officers was taken into custody and arraigned Oct. 27 in Ashland County Circuit Court before Judge Robert Eaton. Heid was charged with "obstructing an officer" (a misdemeanor with maximum penalties of nine months in jail and a \$10,000 fine) and trespass. Heid was released on a signature bond and a bench trial was set for Dec. 8. John waived his right to a status hearing, a jury trial and an attorney, saying he would speak on his own behalf.

Judge Eaton later held a hearing on a motion to dismiss an identical obstruction charge brought against ELF resisters Jane Hosking & Ida Cunningham, both of Duluth. At the hearing, Ida and Jane's Nov. 5, 1997 jury trial was postponed. Then,

IEER researchers, writing in the latest *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, report that "the AEC gave the photographic industry maps and forecasts of potential contamination, as well as expected fallout distributions, which enabled them to purchase uncontaminated materials..."

The *Bulletin* reports that a month after the July 16, 1945 "Trinity" explosion in Alamogordo, NM—the very first nuclear weapons detonation—Kodak customers began complaining of fogged X-ray film. A Kodak physicist found that packaging material made of corn husks from Indiana had been contaminated by radioactive fallout from the Trinity blast 1,000 miles away.

In 1951, following the first Nevada Test Site explosion near Las Vegas, fallout was dumped directly on Kodak's headquarters in far-off Rochester, NY. Kodak threatened to sue the AEC. To avoid disclosing its knowledge of fallout patterns, the AEC agreed to provide the film industry with "advance information on future tests" including "distribution of radioactive material in order to anticipate local contamination."

The Kodak Co. had an insider's understanding of the dangers of radioactive contamination because it ran the Government's Tennessee Eastman uranium processing plant at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory—now one of the most radioactively contaminated places in the United States.

"It really is odd that the Government would warn Kodak about its film but it wouldn't warn the general public about the milk it was drinking. The only thing I can surmise, is that they just didn't want any public reaction against the atomic tests," said U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, (D-IA). Harkin is on a House Appropriations subcommittee that held a short hearing Oct. 1 to consider the implications of the disclosures. Sen. Harkin has hinted at the possibility of demanding Federal compensation for victims of thyroid or other health problems resulting from the bombings.

The news of this decades-long cover-up comes on the heels of a National Cancer Institute (NCI) study, 14 years in the making, that concluded that between 10,000 and 75,000 adults—who were children in the 1950s—may contract thyroid cancer as a result of being poisoned by the same fallout the film companies were warned about. Ten percent of the cancer cases are expected to be fatal.

The NCI's cancer estimates were derived from projections of iodine-131 fallout amounts for all 3,071 counties in the con-

rather than rule on the motion to dismiss, Judge Eaton ordered briefs from both parties on the sufficiency of the obstruction charge. By Dec. 20, the Judge is to reschedule the motion hearing. Attorney John Bachman of Eau Claire, with the research help of law student and ELF resister Andrea Baker in Madison, has volunteered to represent Ida and prepare the brief in support of dismissal. Jane will represent herself.

Since the end of the cold war and the disappearance of the Navy's rationale for nuclear weapons, over 400 arrests have taken place at the Wisconsin ELF site. The Coalition to Stop Project ELF, led by the Anathoth Community, Nukewatch and Loaves & Fishes, has organized 32 civil protests at the remote transmitter, and 37 war resisters have served more than 40 months in jail for refusing to pay trespass fines.

## CELEBRATE NONVIOLENCE

AND THE

## MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY

### January 17 & 18, 1998

Saturday, Sigurd Olson Institute, Northland College, Ashland:

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon: Welcome, ELF Background Information, Legal Consequences of Nonviolent Action, Roundtable Discussion of Civilian-Based Defense by Colleen McDonald-Morken

12:00 - 1:00 - Lunch

1:00 - 5:00 - Support, Logistics and Nonviolence training

5:30 p.m. - Potluck Dinner

8:00 p.m. - Keynote: Malkia M'Buzi Moore of the War Resisters League

Sunday at the Sigurd Olson Institute:

9:00 a.m. - Talking circle, then Caravan to Project ELF

12:00 Noon - Lunch, nonviolent direct action:

Inspection of Project ELF

For more information contact: Laureatian Shield Resources, (715) 364-8533; or Bob Cornett, (715) 682-1289 or 682-3932, email: sunbills@nsee.net

tiguous United States. The NCI claims not to know whether internal doses are more or less likely to result in cancer than external doses. The NCI study presumed that if an internal iodine-131 dose is only 20 percent as harmful as an external dose, then 10,000 thyroid cancer cases are expected. At the high end, 75,000 thyroid cancers are expected if an internal and external dose are equally harmful. (The NCI projected that internal exposures came from contaminated milk, air, leafy vegetables, goats' milk, cottage cheese and eggs.)

It is commonly understood that an internal dose of radioactive iodine is more harmful than an external dose. Iodine-131 is an emitter of beta and gamma radiation which can pass through the skin to damage living cells. But because beta particles penetrate cell membranes more easily than they penetrate skin, their most serious and irreparable damage is done when we ingest contaminated food, water or milk.

## International Vigilers Demand Release of Mordechai Vanunu

By Felice Cohen-Joppa

Sixteen activists from around the world joined together with Israelis for a week-long series of vigils to demand freedom for nuclear whistle blower Mordechai Vanunu. In 1986, Vanunu was kidnapped by Israeli secret police and charged with treason and espionage for giving information about Israel's nuclear weapons production to the *London Sunday Times*.

Representing Great Britain, Australia, Canada, Israel, the United States and Belgium, vigilers stood each day, September 24-30, outside the gates of Ashkelon Prison, where Vanunu has spent the past 11 years in solitary confinement in a 2-by-3-meter cell. With their banners, placards, petitions and leaflets, they also vigiled at other sites related to the case, such as the Ministries of Justice and Defense, various embassies and the Prime Minister's and President's residences.

On September 27, the international delegation joined over 50 Israelis of all ages at the Dimona nuclear facility in the Negev Desert, where Vanunu had worked as a technician. Joined for speeches and songs, and carrying their colorful signs and banners, the group held the largest anti-nuclear demonstration in Israeli history!

In public places during the week, vigilers handed out thousands of leaflets to Israeli citizens. A good deal of the response they received was predictably angry, referring to Vanunu as the "atom spy" or "traitor" that he has been so thoroughly and inaccurately portrayed to be by the Israeli government and media. Yet even among those who thought that Vanunu had done something wrong were many who expressed that 11 years is enough, and he should be released. Most heartening were the gestures and words of support. Some drivers gave a thumbs up or peace sign while driving by. Passersby stopped to talk, and some thanked the vigilers for being there. One man shared his belief that Vanunu is the greatest man in Israel, and is his hero.

Five of the U.S. participants fasted on liquids for the seven days of the vigil. They stated, "We appeal to those in power who can effect Vanunu's release to have mercy and compassion. We hope and pray this fast will help to change the hearts of a people who themselves have suffered injustice and oppression—and to ultimately help free Vanunu."

On September 30, the last day of the vigil and the 11th anniversary of Vanunu's imprisonment, the rock band "U2" performed their first concert in Israel. As a result of a written request from vigilers earlier in the week, lead singer Bono, his face projected on a huge screen, made an eloquent appeal during the concert for Vanunu's release to the more than 40,000 assembled fans. His statement was broadcast on TV and radio the next day, and reported in four newspapers.

Meir Vanunu, who had come from London to join the vigils for his brother's release, was able to visit Mordechai twice during the week inside Ashkelon Prison. Mordechai asked him to thank the vigilers for coming, and stated, "I am here because of the nuclear weapons reality, and I'm going to fight and struggle on this issue until they are dismantled."

The international vigil was organized jointly by the U.S., British and Israeli campaigns to free Vanunu.

Letters to Mordechai Vanunu can be sent to Ashkelon Prison, Ashkelon, Israel.

Felice Cohen-Joppa edits *The Nuclear Resister in Tucson, AZ*. To receive a sample copy of "I Am Your Spy" newsletter, contact: U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu, 2206 Fox Ave., Madison, WI 53711.

# Ten Years of Community at Anathoth

*Note: Nukewatch moved to the Anathoth Community Farm, on the Plowshares Land Trust near Luck, WI, in September 1996. The Community is organized around "radical nonviolence and sustainable living." The Plowshares Land Trust has tenets for the people living in Community. Each member is trusted to conscientiously resist militarism and ecological degradation; to employ only nonviolent means while working to create a society free from war, racism, sexism and human exploitation; to practice non-chemical, organic gardening & farming; and to practice and support a way of life that includes voluntary poverty, military tax refusal, and minimal environmental impact. This article is excerpted from the Farm News.*

by Barb Kass

It all started with a letter sent 11 years ago to friends in our address book and a few wider circles asking for \$100 as a loan or a donation to help establish a rural resistance community. Six weeks later, donations and pledges totaled \$20,000. So begins the story of what is now known as the Anathoth Community Farm.

We hoped for community from the beginning, for camaraderie in the vision and the task. When we advertised for members in *Sojourners* magazine, we were reminded by Liz McAlister that community is a gift, not something that can be manufactured. She was right. In the spring of 1989, we got a "We are serious about joining you" letter from Barb Katt and John LaForge. In a few short months, they were here, living in a borrowed tepee while we constructed the second building. In 1992, they moved into the third, the "solar house," after we'd built a garage and shop combo.

Linda and Jim Miles and their three children moved to the Farm in June of 1994. Bonnie Urfer came in the Fall of 1996. Recently, Brenda Johnson and Jay Stackhouse and their children have begun their "exploratory year" with the community, sharing living space with Jim and Linda. What started as five is now 18.

Our shared commitment to the vision and task of non-violence has tempered the inevitable work of meshing styles and perspectives over the years. Having individual living space has been an important factor in the longevity of the community—allowing room for both personal preference and consensus. We have to work hard at keeping the bonds strong and the personal communication open. We don't meet enough, play enough, or dream enough together. Still the illusive gift of community is clearly present among us.

Ten years has provided many opportunities to test the skills and philosophies of nonviolent direct action in the public arena. Addressing the Navy's Project ELF and Trident has been our most consistent political focus, broadening from personal witness in the early 1980's, to consulting with legislators in Congress, resulting in the current bills pending, that would cut all ELF funding. The Farm has co-sponsored an annual Mother's Day event for 10 years, several of which included weekend camps here at Anathoth. The Coalition to Stop Project ELF is coordinated from our office, and collectively, we have spent over 2 years in jail resisting ELF & Trident. After so many years of collaboration, the addition of Nukewatch in 1996 was a natural step.

Many other campaigns have called for our collective response: Support of Treaty Rights, resistance to sulfide mining, nukes in space and landmines, etc.

We can celebrate a small victory over the Ground Wave Emergency Network campaign (GWEN), the Pentagon's computer system for conducting nuclear war. A phone call from *ABC News* prompted a public demonstration at a GWEN site in Medford, WI. Working with Nancy Foster's GWEN Project in Amherst, MA, enough pressure was placed on Congress in 1993 to cut funding for new towers.

There never seems an end to critical issues that need time, attention and action. The structure of the Farm allows for one or more of us to address many of them in significant ways because there are others who can keep the home fires tended.

Growing most of the food we consume is one way we strive for balance. The garden nourishes not only our bodies, but also our spirits and becomes a primary focus from May until October. Our schedules and separate projects often get in the way of spending quality time with each other, and the garden helps solve this dilemma by providing those needed times of reconnection as the weeding gets done.

Over the years, the number of visitors has increased dramatically. Guests from Germany, Britain, Indonesia, Sweden, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Scotland have strengthened our global connection. Student groups from regional colleges, as well as Alternative Spring Break groups have scrutinized our lives and our work, hopefully going home with wider possibilities for their own. We host the Luck school's second grade field trip each Spring.

Dare we say that the world is a better place because of a place called Anathoth? Only in the humblest tones can we answer yes. The goodness and change have come about not because of who we are, but in spite of it. Community is hard. We fail as often as we succeed in doing it well. But somehow our efforts have been honored. Anathoth Community is a sign of hope to many people looking for integration of life, work and vision.

It is a hopeful sign to us that we are celebrating 10 years together. We look ahead knowing the challenges of community will continue to be large. The unyielding support we've received over the years has sustained us and given us hope and determination for the decade to come.

*Barb Kass is a member of the Anathoth Community Farm and a social worker.*

The *Pathfinder* is the quarterly newsletter of Nukewatch, a project of The Progressive Foundation, founded in 1979.

Nukewatch Board of Directors

Samuel H. Day, Jr., Patricia Kane, Barb Katt, Bobby King, John LaForge & Bonnie Urfer

Nukewatch Staff

Bonnie Urfer and John LaForge

Nukewatch Volunteers

Brenda Johnson and Barb Katt

Nukewatch educates and organizes to nonviolently create an environment free of the nuclear industry and free of weapons of mass destruction.

The *Pathfinder* submission deadlines: Nov. 15, Feb. 15, May 15, Aug. 15.



The sunflower has been adopted by the peace and anti-nuclear movement as a symbol of the struggle for a nuclear-free world. The above design, by Bonnie Urfer, Nukewatch Co-director, is available on T-shirts and note cards.

**T-SHIRTS** are 100% cotton, heavy weight material. **COLORS:** natural, olive green, and black. **SIZES:** medium, large, X-large and XX-large. **COST:** \$15.00 for medium, large & X-large; \$17.00 for XX-large. **POSTAGE:** \$2.00 for 1 shirt, \$1.00 for each additional shirt.

**NOTE CARDS** with sunflower design (without text) on cover, blank inside, black ink printed on light gray, 4 1/4" X 5 1/2". **COST:** pack of 10 cards with envelopes, \$5.00.

Your purchase supports the work of Nukewatch.

Send your order to Nukewatch, P.O. Box 649, Luck, WI 54853. Thanks!

## FOOD IRRADIATION In Fine Print, for Better Sales



This "Radura" symbol means:  
**TREATED WITH  
GAMMA RADIATION**

For good reason, consumers aren't buying food labeled "irradiated." That's why the irradiation industry is pushing an FDA law (HR-2480 and S-830), now under consideration, that would minimize the labeling requirements. Urge your Rep's to vote no.

The irrelevant image of a flower in a broken circle (called "radura") is now used, along with a written warning, to identify irradiated foods. The industry bill would reduce the warning from a prominent "treated with radiation" statement on the front of the package, to an ingredient listing-size label on the back. The same bill would also force the FDA to approve beef irradiation. The idea is gaining support, especially after the recall of 25 million pounds of beef from a dirty Colorado meat packing plant.

Whole foods now approved for irradiation include pork, poultry, nuts, potatoes, wheat, wheat flour, fruits and vegetables, tea and 60 dried herbs and spices. However, the FDA requires no labeling of irradiated ingredients, so for example, canned soup made with irradiated potatoes and spices need not be so labeled.

Food irradiation is a process whereby food is exposed to up to 300,000 rads of gamma radiation—the equivalent of 30 million chest X-rays—in order to extend shelf life and kill insects and bacteria. This amount is over 20,000 times the allowed yearly exposure level for workers at a nuclear power reactor site.

The industry uses cobalt-60 or even cesium-137—an extremely hazardous isotope that's water soluble and deadly for 600 years—as gamma ray sources. Both are radioactive wastes left in huge quantities from nuclear power and weapons reactors. The FDA's Jim Greene said in 1986 that using the cesium-137, "could substantially reduce the cost of disposing of nuclear waste." (*Grand Forks Herald*, 28 April 1986.)

The irradiation process produces new chemicals in the treated food called radiolytic products, some of which are known carcinogens or mutagens. The process also destroys nutrients essential to human health, such as vitamin A, B, C, E, and K.

Besides increasing the risky transportation of radioactive materials on railroads and highways, food irradiation would put factory communities and food industry workers at risk of spills or leaks. In DeKalb County Georgia, Radiation Sterilizers, Inc. (RSI) got 252 twenty-one-inch canisters of cesium-137—which were never designed for use at an irradiation facility—from the DOE, and in 1988 began using the them to irradiate spices. After only two years, a cesium capsule began leaking into RSI's storage pool. It took federal officials six months to even find the leak's source. Contaminated workers took the poison home with them. In 1992 the building was abandoned and RSI took the word "radiation" out of its name. Now they're "SteriGenics." —*John LaForge and Jeff Peterson*

The nonprofit group Food & Water is working to keep irradiated foods off grocery store shelves. Call them at 1-800-328-7233 for more info. and their "Dear Retailer" cards that will let your grocer know you don't want irradiated food in the store next to what you eat.

# NUCLEAR SHORTS

## Plutonium Found in Las Vegas Attics

☛ A University of Nevada chemistry student, Jim Cizdziel, has found that "dust in 15 older homes sampled in Las Vegas contained more plutonium than expected." He told a local paper that the plutonium, the most deadly toxin known to science, doesn't pose a health risk to people living in the homes. "It's more of a scientific curiosity than a health concern."

The Department of Energy's (DOE's) Greg Cook said the research "caught me cold," but decided that "We don't see it as a rising public health risk." The DOE claims that its above-ground H-bomb detonations were done only when Las Vegas was upwind of the blasts. Cizdziel's paper, "Attic Dust: A new study of radioactive fallout from the Nevada Test Site," suggests that the plutonium came from so-called "safety tests" in which H-bombs were put through transportation crash tests. The bombs did not explode Cizdziel said, "but they did spread plutonium around in the desert." Cizdziel's paper concludes the plutonium was later blown by high winds from the desert into Las Vegas. The DOE conceded that the theory might have merit. —Las Vegas Nevada Review-Journal, 13 Sept. 1997.

## Pro-War Potassium Palliative

☛ The British Nuclear Navy has a nuclear submarine base and refit yard in the middle of the most populated area southwest of Bristol. Any release of radiation would have devastating consequences for the inhabitants and the environment.

At a recent community meeting held at Devonport, Plymouth, the Navy outlined their plans to help the victims of a nuclear accident. Two hundred military personnel will hand out potassium iodate tablets (to block the retention of radioactive iodine-131) and 50 sailors wearing paper face masks will run around city streets posting tablets and leaflets. City councilors worried that many inhabitants wouldn't be able to read the leaflets.

When asked about the masked sailors, the Navy told the audience that the paper masks would be worn only if a release of radiation occurred. The masked men would know of releases because a second alarm would sound. Unfortunately, residents have been told that hearing a second siren would signal the "all clear."

While the Navy said evacuation was the responsibility of the local authority, the local authority said it was the police's job and the police inspector had no comment.

—"Emergency Preparedness for Major Nuclear Accidents," 1996, via Plymouth Nuclear Information Group, UK.

## Star Wars: Armed and Dangerous

☛ After two failed attempts, the Pentagon says the Army successfully tested a high-powered laser Oct. 17. With a blast of smoke on the ground caused by the use of chemicals, the laser beam reached a camera on a satellite 260 miles above the earth. The Pentagon says the satellite was not damaged, but could have been destroyed if the power had been increased or the laser kept on longer. The Pentagon's spokesperson said the test proves what they've long feared, that its own satellites (or intelligence, civilian and commercial ones) are vulnerable to laser weapons. Russia expressed concern about the testing, pointing to the laser's threat to Russian satellites.

Research into space weapons technology is moving rapidly and is a continuation of the 1980's Strategic Defense Initiative, or Star Wars, now called Ballistic Missile Defense.

In 1985 Congress explicitly prohibited the laser test, but today's Republican-controlled Congress allowed the ban to expire two years ago and now enthusiastically funds a wide range of projects designed to enhance U.S. superiority and war making techniques in the atmosphere and beyond.

—Associated Press, 21 Oct. 1997

## British Submarine Contaminates Crew

☛ More than 130 sailors were given emergency medical tests after they were trapped aboard *HMS Turbulent* when radioactive coolant started leaking from the submarine's reactor.

The crew was carrying out post-refit trials in the North Atlantic and was said to have brought the leak under control. They kept the reactor running en route to Devonport Docks.

The Royal Navy said the medical tests on its personnel came back negative. The seven workers from DML (Devonport Management Limited, private owners of Devonport Royal Dockyard), which carried out the refuel and refit before the ship went to sea, are all said to be safe. Reginald Shields, head of corporate affairs for DML, said, "The problem with the reactor is still being investigated before they can fix it. The Ministry of Defense is running that program."

A Royal Navy spokesman said, "They have done various tests to personnel and some of the people went up to Derriford Hospital. Of course anything like this is going to be of concern. The safety of the people on board is vitally important." The Navy asserted that people in the city of Plymouth had nothing to fear from the faulty submarine, part of the 2nd Submarine Squadron based in Devonport.

The Navy said the leak was contained within a specially designed unmanned area, that there had been no leakage into the atmosphere, and no need to inform the public.

—Kevin Owen, Plymouth Nuclear Dump Information Group, *Plymouth Sunday Independent*, Plymouth, UK, 16 Nov. 1997.

## Chernobyl's Effects Seen in Delayed Mutations

☛ A new study has found evidence of severe and permanent radiation-induced mutations in barn swallows exposed to Chernobyl's fallout. The Oct. 9 issue of *Nature* reports that researchers from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences found a sharp increase in the number of albino swallows and in their genetic damage, as indicated by DNA "fingerprinting." The study compared birds exposed to the Chernobyl fallout—from the April 26, 1986 reactor explosions—to birds that were not exposed. Geneticists at the University of Georgia reported in 1995 that field mice in the official contaminated zone also suffered severe mutations. The differences in the genes between exposed and unexposed mice were found to be greater than that found between mice and rats.

In 1992, two separate research teams (one at Harvard, the other at Oxford) discovered a previously unknown "delayed mutation effect" in mice caused by low-level alpha and X radiation. The scientists found chromosome damage in descendant cells, many cell divisions after exposure. The significance of the findings is that the irradiated cell's immediate descendants seemed normal, but passed on damage that only appeared much later. If confirmed, these studies foretell an eventual "ballooning" mutation and cancers which will appear long after one's exposure to low-levels of radiation.

—*WISE News Communiqué*, No. 480, 31 Oct. 1997; *WISE*, No. 437, 18 Aug. 1995; *New York Times*, 20 Feb. 1992 (A12).

## British Trident: More Missiles, More Accidents

☛ Nukewatch-UK's Di McDonald has been tracking nuclear weapons convoys for more than a decade. McDonald reports that on Oct. 31, a Harrier jump jet crashed in the woods near Peterborough, 400 yards from where a convoy of four Trident nuclear warhead haulers was parked for the night. The convoy was destined for the Trident submarine base in Coulport, Scotland.

Adding to the number of future convoys, the newly elected, formerly pro-disarmament Labor government says it will now spend \$162 million on seven new Trident missiles for its four Trident submarines—bringing the number of Trident missiles in the UK to 58. U.S.-based Lockheed Martin Corp. supplies the UK with all of its nuclear weapons fixes.

—Nukewatch, UK; *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 Oct. 1997.

## Colorado Health Advisory: Don't Breathe

☛ On Tuesday, Sept. 30, 1997 at 2:20 p.m., a gravel truck tipped over and dumped its entire load—25 tons of raw uranium ore—onto Interstate 25 in downtown Colorado Springs. The ore was going from the Swartzwater Mine, in Golden, CO, to the Cotter Corporation in Canon City, CO. The freeway was closed until 10:00 p.m.

Hazardous materials response team members chose not to evacuate households near the freeway, but did warn residents that if the wind picked up, it was "not safe to breathe dust particles in the area."

The Colorado Springs Fire Department reports that at least 10 of these shipments pass through the city on I-25 every week. A tarp is the only covering required for the uranium ore during transport. The same interstate route is used to ship transuranic (heavier than uranium) radioactive waste from the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory to the WIPP site in New Mexico, and activists hope to spark interest in the danger of radwaste shipments using this incident as an example. —*Citizens for Peace in Space*, Colorado Springs, CO.

## Beaches, Fish and the Seabed Contaminated

☛ In Scotland, the Government has established a 1.2-mile fishing "exclusion zone" around a discharge pipe from the reprocessing plant at Dounreay on the North Coast. One wonders if the fish will obediently stay within the zone. The Oct. 29 ban, which applies also to shell fish, comes after the August 31 discovery of radioactive "hotspots" on local beaches

and in the surrounding seabed. The radioactivity was found emanating from fragments of highly enriched uranium fuel rods which were reprocessed at the site in the 1960s and 1970s. Dounreay workers have alleged that chunks of the highly radioactive used reactor fuel have been allowed into the discharge system and dumped into the sea, a claim the UK Atomic Energy Authority, which runs the complex, has strongly denied.

—*The Nuclear Examiner*, Panhandle, TX, Nov. 1997; *WISE News Communiqué*, No. 477, 12 Sept. 1997.

## Bomb Building As Usual, Test Ban or Not

☛ The U.S. continued nuclear weapons testing underground at the Nevada Test Site with its Sept. 18 "Holog" detonation. The DOE called the blast "subcritical" and claims it was not a violation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty signed in 1996. DOE plans four more such tests in 1998. The Treaty commits the government "not to carry out any nuclear weapons test explosion or any other nuclear explosion..." DOE bomb builders say new tests only ensure the "safety and reliability" of the H-bomb arsenal. However, the DOE's secret 1996 "Green Book," acquired by Citizens Against a Radioactive Environment via a Freedom of Information Act law suit, says the "subcritical" tests "provide data for nuclear design laboratory programs." And the DOE's formerly secret "Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan," of Feb. 1996, acquired by the Natural Resources Defense Council, describes plans to replace warheads for the Trident missile. "One design," DOE says, "would require new pit fabrication," referring to the thermonuclear warheads.

—Tri-Valley CAREs, *Citizen's Watch*, Livermore, CA Oct. 1997; *New York Times*, 18 Aug. 1997.

## Nuclear Waste "Isolation" Scam May be Approved

☛ The EPA granted tentative approval Oct. 23 to the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP), the huge, experimental deep burial site for certain nuclear weapon's waste. Some 850,000 drums of the cancer-causing garbage is now stored at DOE facilities around the country.

Before the first of some 37,000 shipments (17 trucks a week) of the plutonium-tainted waste begins racing along U.S. highways, the DOE must meet some tough conditions set by EPA. DOE must certify it has "a reasonable expectation" that for 10,000 years the dump will prevent human radiation doses higher than the equivalent of two chest X-rays per year.

Even that tall order might be easier to fill than the requirement that DOE identify just what it has in its drums. DOE's Draft Compliance Certificate Application says merely that "Assessments of the performance of the repository are based on assumed characteristics of the waste to be emplaced in the WIPP."

Some of the drums contain so much radiation that it must be handled remotely in specially shielded "hot cells" that the DOE doesn't yet have. The DOE's inability to meet safety requirements has kept the dump from opening for ten years. It was completed in 1988.

—*Reuters*, 25 Oct. 1997; "Greetings from WIPP," 47-page booklet, 1996, by Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping (CARD), Albuquerque, NM.

## Resources

- \* *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 6042 S. Kimbark, Chicago, IL 60637, (773) 702-2555 (monthly, \$36/yr).
- \* Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping, 144 Harvard S.E., Albuquerque, NM 87109, (505) 266-2663.
- \* Citizens for Peace in Space, P.O. Box 915, Colo. Spgs., CO 80904, (719) 632-6189.
- \* *Citizen's Watch*, Tri-Valley Citizens Against a Radioactive Environment, 5720 East Ave., No. 116, Livermore, CA 94550, (510) 443-7148.
- \* Food & Water (info. on food irradiation), RR 1, Box 68D, Walden, VT 05873, (802) 563-3300 or 1-800-328-7233.
- \* Institute for Energy & Environmental Research (IEER), 6935 Laurel Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912, (301) 270-5500. IEER's quarterly *Science for Democratic Action* is free.
- \* *The Nuclear Examiner*, STAR, HC Box 25, Panhandle, TX 79068.
- \* Nukewatch, UK, 30 Westwood Road, Southampton, SO17 1DN, UK.
- ☛ Plymouth Nuclear Dump Information Group, 71 Copse Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 1QB, UK.
- \* Tennessee Valley Energy Reform Coalition, P.O. Box 1842, Knoxville, TN 37901, (423) 637-4479.
- \* *WISE News Communiqué*, World Info. Service on Energy, P.O. Box 59636, 1040 LC Amsterdam, Netherlands, Phone: 31-20-612-6368, (twice monthly, \$35/yr).

# EAST SENTENCING WEST

by Bonnie Urfer

**Out East:** Harshly condemning one of disarmament's best known advocates, a federal judge in Portland, Maine sentenced Philip Berrigan, to two years in federal prison. For the same Plowshares action, Susan Crane got 27 months; Steve Kelly, 21 months; Mark Colville, 13 months; Steve Baggaly, 13 months and Tom Lewis-Borbely, six months. The abolitionists were found guilty of conspiracy and destruction of government property for their Feb. 14 "Prince of Peace Plowshares" action at the Bath Iron Works (BIW) in Maine. The group hammered and poured blood on *The Sullivans*, a Navy destroyer.

U.S. District Judge Gene Carter ordered each to pay an arbitrary \$4,704 in restitution. At the restitution hearing, Susan Crane, wearing jail-issue orange, held a hand-made sign with her damage estimate: "Nuclear Weapons Have No Value."

Numerous arrests took place in support of the defendants. Immediately following the sentencing, nine people chained closed the gates of BIW, were arrested and were jailed over night. Five others were arrested for chaining themselves to the fence. John

Schuchardt was arrested in May for praying in front of the courthouse. Jim Reale was jailed for five days in May after unfurling a banner from the arch above the courthouse door. Support actions were met with various charges but were uniformly sentenced to time served. An additional \$100 fine was levied against John Schuchardt.

**Out West:** In Nevada, on the other hand, Clark County Justice of the Peace Tony Abbatangelo said for the record, "It's common knowledge that radioactive materials threaten water, land and humans." He sentenced 13 activists who helped blockade U.S. Hwy. 95 in Nevada in April—closing the Nevada Test Site—to make a \$200 contribution to and serve 40 hours of community service with their favorite organization.

Send letters of support to: Phil Berrigan, Susan Crane & Steve Kelly: c/o Jonah House, 1301 Moreland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21216; Steve Baggaly: c/o Norfolk C.W., 1321 W. 38 St., Norfolk, VA 23505; Tom Lewis-Borbely: c/o Emma House, 136 Austin St., Worcester, MA 01609 and Mark Colville: c/o Cesar Jerez C.W., 203 Rosette St., New Haven, CT 06915.

## Calendar of Events 1997

**Ongoing—Christian Peacemaker Teams** is a program of Mennonite, Church of the Brethren Congregations, and Quaker meetings. Peacemakers are trained and sent into situations of violent conflict to support local nonviolent efforts. 1998 destinations include Honduras, Palestine and Israel, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa. **Contact:** Christian Peacemaker Teams, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680. Phone: (312) 455-1199; Fax: (312) 666-2677; email: [cpt@igc.org](mailto:cpt@igc.org)

### December

**10—A Call to Conversion—Renounce the Arms Trade,** Alan Nairn, Andrea Needham, and Jennifer Washburn will speak at a legal, 11:00 a.m. rally. Nonviolent direct action is scheduled for noon at Lockheed-Sanders, Nashua, New Hampshire, on Human Rights Day. Endorsed by New Hampshire Greens, NH Peace Action, and Forces of Nature. **Contact:** (603) 228-0559.

**26-28—the Feast of the Holy Innocence annual gathering and action at STRATCOM.** Fri - Welcome and party at University of Nebraska, Omaha - Religious Center, 101 N. Happy Hollow Blvd., 6:00 p.m. registration. Sat. - non-violence training & discussion. Sunday - a.m. service, noon witness & crossing of the line at Offutt AFB, STRATCOM Headquarters, Kinney Gate off Hwy 75/73. **Contact:** Jo Peterson (402) 556-9057, or Frank Cordaro (515) 534-4691.

**31-January 1—New Year's Eve Gathering:** "Strengthening the Web of Life," building community, sharing stories, planning for the future, vigil at Kings Bay Trident Sub Base. Crooked River State Park, Cottage 2, Spur 40, St. Marys, GA: Wed - 6:00 p.m., Open House, bring food to share. 10:00 p.m., Candlelight walk to Kings Bay, bring a

lantern; Thur - 10:00 a.m. until Noon, discussion. **Contact and RSVP:** Metanoia Community, 12230 Flynn Woods Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32223. Phone: (904) 262-5071.

## 1998

### January

**17-18—Celebrate Nonviolence and the Martin Luther King Holiday** at Northland College, Ashland, WI and at Project ELF. Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to noon: ELF background, legal consequences, discussion. 1:00 to 5:00: support, logistics & nonviolence training. 8:00 p.m. keynote: Malkia M'Buzi Moore. Sunday: 9:00 a.m.: discussion, caravan to ELF. Noon: nonviolent action. **Contact:** Laurentian Shield, (715) 364-8533 or Bob Cornett, (715) 682-1289 or 682-3932.

**19-April 4—A Pilgrimage to Live King's Dream—** Organized by Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Nipponzan Myohoji, a Buddhist order, will walk from Atlanta, GA, Dr. King's birthplace, to Memphis, arriving on April 4th, the 30th anniversary of his death. **Contact:** SCLC, Phone: (404) 522-1420; Brother Konomo Utsumi or Sister Denise Laffan, 1127 Glenwood Ave. SE, Atlanta, GA 30316. Phone: (404) 627-8948.

### April

**7-13—Spring Gathering at the Nevada Test Site,** incorporating and supporting nonviolent direct action; 7th through the 9th, Council of Women; 10th through 13th, Healing Global Wounds; Easter Sunday—Lenten Desert Experience; **Contact:** Healing Global Wounds, P.O. Box 13, Boulder Creek, CA 95006. Phone: (408) 338-0147; Nevada Desert Experience, P.O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV. Phone: (702) 646-4814; COW, c/o FCS, 171 S. Congress, Austin, TX 78704. Phone: (512) 447-6222

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