

For Immediate Release

Events begin August 2

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When an educational maze winds around the edge of the Ashland Plaza, providing information about the dangers of nuclear technology as colorful origami peace cranes dance with the warm August breezes, it signals the 29th annual peace vigil is underway.

Every August 6 through August 9, the 69th anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, members of Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF), and other local organizations provide opportunities to reflect on these experiences; learn more about the remaining impacts of nuclear weapons, waste and reactors; and recommit to working toward a nuclear free world. They also provide information about the legacy of radiation contamination, the problems with reliance on nuclear power, and alternatives that can meet our world's energy needs.

This year's theme is "Stop The Madness: Create a S.A.N.E. World", in recognition of current legislation in the U.S. Senate and House to cut \$100 billion from nuclear weapons modernization programs, without jeopardizing national security.

Information about the increasing worldwide momentum to negotiate the banning and abolishing of nuclear weapons, including lawsuits filed by the Republic of the Marshall Islands in the International Court of Justice against the nine nuclear-weapon states, will also be available.

On August 2nd, featured speaker Charles K. Johnson from the Physicians for Social Responsibility will give a free presentation "Nuclear Power & Nuclear Weapons: The Hanford Connection" at 7 pm at the Rogue Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 87 Fourth St., Ashland.

The Opening Ceremony begins at 8:00 AM on August 6th on the grassy entrance to Lithia Park, officiated by Rev. Paul Sohl of Ashland's United Church of Christ. At 8:15 AM (the minute the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima) there will be a moment of silence as the memorial candle is lit in remembrance. Internationally-recognized singer/composer Masako Cross will sing, accompanied by Phoebe Knowles on harp.

Directly afterwards, the public is invited to visit the downtown Ashland plaza offerings until 7 pm on August 8th. Visit the large educational display "Nuclear Maze", information table, and available activities. Fold a crane or write a haiku poem for our Peace Tree. Volunteers will be on hand to answer questions all three days and two nights. Times for specific events are as follows:

August 6 from 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM Dancing Spirit drum, honoring Indigenous Peoples (Brent

Florendo and extended family)

August 6 from 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM Origami crane-folding instruction with Japanese Assn. of Southern Oregon members.

August 6 at 6:00 PM Heather Hutton, vocals and guitar

August 7 from 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM Talk & Haiku workshop (drop in) with Nina Egert

August 7 at 6:00 PM Peace Rock (Kim Griswell, lead vocals; Rob Lowry, keyboard & vocals; Neil Holland, guitar)

August 8 from 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM Talk & Haiku workshop (drop in) with Nina Egert

August 8 at 6:00 PM Masako Cross, vocals & keyboard, with Phoebe Knowles, harp

The Closing Ceremony to commemorate the victims of Nagasaki will be held in the upper Japanese Garden in Lithia Park on August 9 at 7:00 PM. Rev. Norma Burton of Unity Church will officiate, joined by the Japanese Assn. of Southern Oregon singers, and Richard Williams on shakuhachi flute. Everyone will be invited to float a sunflower, an international symbol of the abolition of nuclear weapons.

On August 12 at 7 pm a free showing of “Return of Navajo Boy” and Interview with Charmaine White Face is provided by the Medford Citizens for Peace & Justice. Both films show the impact of widespread uranium mining and milling on tribal people and lands. They will be shown at the Medford Public Library, Adams Room.

In 1981 the city of Ashland was designated a nuclear free zone and in 1998 Ashland became a member of Mayors for Peace and joined what has become 6,127 cities in 158 countries and regions with the shared goals of ridding the world of nuclear weapons and promoting peace.

“Around the world people unite to remember the human cost of nuclear weapons and to visualize a world without the threat of nuclear catastrophes. We come together to hear the words of survivors, learn from the past, and help create a safer future for all.”

The 29th annual Rogue Valley Hiroshima - Nagasaki Vigil is hosted by the Ashland branch of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Co-sponsors include Peace House, One Sunny Day Initiatives & OSDI Japan, Red Earth Descendants, Medford Citizens for Peace & Justice, Rogue Valley Peace Choir, Ashland United Church of Christ, Japanese Association of Southern Oregon, SOU United Nations Club, Rogue Valley Peace Veterans, South Mountain Friends Meeting, Veterans for Peace-Rogue Valley Chapter 156, JC Pacific Green Party, Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice, Vinapa Foundation, Unity Church and Flower Tyme.