

PRESS RELEASE: [For Immediate Release](#)

EVENT DATES: August 6 - 9, 2016

FROM: 2016 Hiroshima-Nagasaki Planning Committee

Contact: **Estelle Voeller** evoeller@charter.net (541) 512-1013

31st Annual Hiroshima-Nagasaki Vigil to be held in Ashland and Medford

"Healing Our Nuclear World: What Are We Waiting For?"

This year's August 6th - 9th remembrance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will feature presentations by Greg Boertje-Obed, one of three nuclear disarmament activists who went onto the grounds of the nuclear complex at Oak Ridge, Tennessee in 2012 and committed civil disobedience to highlight our nation's continuing commitment to nuclear weapons. The ease with which they penetrated a supposedly ultra-high security facility startled the nation and evoked the wrath of the government. Boertje-Obed and Rev. Michael Walli were sentenced to 62 months imprisonment; 82-year-old Sister Megan Rice to 26 months. More than two years into their terms, a federal appeals court overturned their conviction for sabotage, and they were released for time served on the minor and proper charge of "degradation of property".

Also featured will be filmmaker Lizabeth Rogers, with her documentary film "Hot Water". She traveled to South Dakota to follow a story about uranium contamination--only to discover the problem flows much farther and runs much deeper than she could imagine. Her film tells the story of those impacted by uranium mining, weapons testing, nuclear energy and the subsequent contamination that runs through our air, soil and--even more dramatically--our water.

The theme "Healing Our Nuclear World: What Are We Waiting For?" reflects the need for bold action to end the on-going threats posed by nuclear weapons and radioactive waste. The observance isn't about debating the decision to use nuclear weapons against Japan. It is about making sure such weapons--now far more powerful--are never used again.

On **August 5**, volunteers will be on the Ashland plaza from 4 - 7 pm to share information, hand out schedules and have petitions to sign. Local poet/singer/composer Phoenix Sigalove will perform from 5 - 6 pm. Volunteers will again be at the Ashland plaza from 9 - noon on August 6.

The observance begins at 8 am on Saturday **August 6** with a ceremony at the entrance to Lithia Park in Ashland. The lyrical voice of Tokyo-based musician Masako Cross will be followed by the lighting of the Memorial Flame and the reading of Ashland Mayor Stromberg's proclamation. Ashland elected to become a nuclear-free zone in 1982, and joined the international Mayors for Peace in 1998. A gong will sound at 8:15 am, the time the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Reflections, sharing and a water ceremony follow.

Also on **August 6** at 11 am at Medford Public Library, Adams Room, Greg Boertje-Obed will talk informally with anyone interested in civil disobedience as a strategy for social change.

Vigil events will continue Sunday **August 7** from noon to 9:30 in the Large Community Room at Medford Public Library. Speakers, films and opportunities to take action and to learn more about nuclear-related issues will be available. The Nuclear Maze will be on display this one day only. At 1 pm the film *Nuclear Tipping Point* interviews former administration and military officials on the urgency of global nuclear disarmament. At 2 pm Michael Niemann, SOU International Studies will give an update on the status of global disarmament, followed by Greg Boertje-Obed at 3 pm, speaking about our nation's continuing commitment to nuclear weapons and why we must respond. At 5 pm, a film on so-called "depleted" uranium weapons, currently being used by our U.S. military with tragic effects for civilians and military members alike, is scheduled. At 7 pm. *Hot Water* will be screened, with filmmaker Lizabeth Rogers joining us for conversation. Parking is free in the public lot across from the library on Saturday and Sunday. After 4 pm Sunday when the library closes, there will be a volunteer at the front door to let people in.

A similar program will be offered in Ashland on Monday **August 8** from 1 - 8:30 pm, at SOU's Meese Room on the 3rd floor of Hannon Library. Greg Boertje-Obed will speak at 1 pm. *Hot Water* and conversation with Lizabeth Rogers is scheduled for 3 pm. At 6 pm another film on "depleted" uranium weapons will be shown. Healing music and words will conclude the evening beginning at 7:15. Musician and poetry lineup to be announced. Parking available above the Hannon Library and on streets – look for directional signs.

Two events are scheduled for the last day **August 9**. From noon - 1 pm in Medford's Alba Park near the gazebo, we will offer reflection and music in recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day. Native people around the world, including in the U.S., have been disproportionately impacted by uranium mining and processing, weapons testing, and radioactive contamination. Phoenix Sigalove will lead us in remembering and honoring those who have been and are currently being harmed by the nuclear fuel chain.

The closing ceremony will be at 7 pm in Ashland's Japanese Garden, in upper Lithia Park. Reflections will be led by Reverend Paula Sohl, Associate Pastor at Ashland United Church of Christ. The Japanese Association of Southern Oregon singers contribute to the ambience. The ceremony will conclude with the floating of sunflowers, the international symbol for nuclear disarmament.

The public is invited and all events are free. Donations are welcome.

Cosponsors of this year's vigil are Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, Peace House, Medford Citizens for Peace & Justice, Occupy Medford, SOU United Nations Club, Veterans for Peace-RV Chap. 156, First Congregational United Church of Christ, South Mountain Friends Meeting, One Sunny Day Initiatives & OSDI Japan, Japanese Association of SO, Justice & Peace Team of Medford Congregational Church of Christ, Social Justice & Action Committee of Rogue Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, SO Jobs with Justice, Rogue Valley Healthcare For All Oregon, JC Pacific Green Party, Rogue Valley Peace Choir, Ashland Unity Church, and Ashland Culture of Peace Commission.