

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

Press Release

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For immediate release and heads up for July films and August event

NUCLEAR ABOLITION WEEK

JULY EVENTS

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is coordinating actions around the world during Nuclear Abolition Week July 6-13, to push for an international treaty to ban all nuclear weapons. Local events:

Tuesday, July 9 at 7:00 PM Showing of free film *In my Lifetime*, which tells the story of the ongoing struggle to ban nuclear weapons, in the Adams Room of Medford Library. Filmed in Europe, Japan and the U.S., the film “focuses on the continuing struggle of citizens, scientists and political leaders working to reduce or eliminate the atomic threat while others search to build nuclear weapons.” Offered by Medford Citizens for Peace & Justice and Occupy Medford as part of their Second Tuesday Film Night, in conjunction with the Hiroshima/Nagasaki Vigil Committee.

Monday, July 15 5-6 PM Happy Hour Peace Talk with Linda Richards on status of nuclear weapons abolition. Richards is finishing her doctoral studies at Oregon State University, focusing on nuclear history and environmental justice. Free monthly conversation sponsored by Peace House, at Tabu Restaurant, 76 N. Pioneer, Ashland. Food and drink available for purchase.

AUGUST EVENTS

[28th Annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki Vigil August 6-9 in Ashland](#)

“A Healthy Planet is Nuclear Free”

Films, guest speakers, displays and “Nuclear Maze” will be featured.

Vigil remembers victims of nuclear bombings and disasters

Underneath a thousand brightly colored, folded paper cranes, there lies a story. It’s a tale of terrible destruction and bright hope. It’s also the history of what happens when ordinary people come together to model peace.

Every August 6 through August 9, members of the Ashland branch of Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) join with other local organizations to invite the community to gather on the Ashland Plaza for a series of events. We remember the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, inform about the dangers of nuclear weapons, reactors and the environmental hazards of radiation contamination, and share hopeful options initiatives to attain a nuclear-free future.

By 1945 World War II was peaking. After President Truman issued an executive order to use the new atomic bombs in Japan, a series of events occurred which left lasting imprints on both Japanese and American culture.

First a nuclear bomb, nicknamed “Little Boy” was loaded onto the ship the *USS Indianapolis* and carried to Guam and the Tinian Islands in Marianas, south of Japan. Then in the early morning hours of August 6, the B-29 bomber known as *Enola Gay* dropped the equivalent of 12,500 tons of TNT over the city of Hiroshima, Japan. The destruction was both immediate and insidiously slow as the lethal radiation had long-reaching effects on the Japanese people. 90,000 people were killed instantly. By 1950 the death toll for that first bomb reached 200,000 people.

For one Medford woman, Hideko Tamura Snider, there was nothing abstract about the great, personal devastation the bombing wrought. She was 11 years old when the bomb hit. Her mother and cousin were killed instantly. Now in her late 70’s, Snider continues to work diligently to bring awareness of the danger of nuclear weapons and of the need for reconciliation and collective healing.

Back on August 9, 1945 a second bomb, this one named “Fat Man” was dropped over the city of Nagasaki, Japan. In a flash, 45,000 people were killed. By 1950 there were 140,000 more deaths as a direct result of the nuclear bomb.

This was the only time in history that atomic bombs were used during wartime. Later nuclear disasters would include Three Mile Island and the Church Rock Tailings Spill in 1979, Chernobyl in 1986 and the meltdown of three reactors in the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant in 2011, all of which had devastating effects.

Around the world people unite to remember the human cost of nuclear weapons and to work toward a world without the threat of nuclear catastrophes. They come together to listen to speakers talk about their experiences, to learn from the past and explore opportunities for the future.

WILPF will host a vigil in Ashland to commemorate this dark chapter of history and to draw attention to the dangers of nuclear weapons and power plants. Several guests from Japan who hosted the Rogue Valley Peace Choir’s 2006 Peace Journey to 3 Japanese cities, will be participating in the events. They are brought through the efforts of cosponsor One Sunny Day Initiatives, founded by Hideko Tamura Snider.

The month of August has been designated “Nuclear Free Future” month by the national organization United for Peace and Justice. In 1982 Ashland was declared a nuclear free zone and in 1998 the city joined the International Mayors for Peace.

The opening ceremony is August 6 at 8:00 AM and will begin with the lighting of a memorial candle. The ceremony will be led by Paula Sohl, Associate Minister of the United Church of Christ, Congregational and is held at the grassy entrance of Lithia Park. A moment of silence will follow, exactly 68 years after the bombing of Hiroshima. Local Hiroshima survivor Hideko Tamura Snider has been asked to light the memorial candle. Mayor John Stromberg will read his proclamation and various speakers will address the participants. International musician Masako Cross from Tokyo, Japan will sing.

August 6 at 9:00 AM Nuclear maze opens in the Ashland plaza.

August 6 from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM Origami crane folding with Japanese Assn. of Southern Oregon (JASO) members.

August 6 at 6:00 PM International Musician Masako Cross will perform.

August 7 at 6:00 PM Remembrance for Indigenous Peoples with Red Earth Descendants and Whistling Elk Drum.

August 8 at 6:00 PM Rogue Valley Peace Choir Ensemble sings in the Ashland Plaza.

August 8 at 7:00 PM Nuclear maze is taken down.

August 9 at 7:00 PM There will be a closing ceremony in the Japanese Garden in Lithia Park. JASO members will sing. Folks who attend the closing ceremony will be invited to float sunflowers down the stream in the Japanese Garden. Sunflowers are a symbol of the nuclear free movement.

August 13 at 7:00 PM a free film **“The Atomic States of America”** will be shown at the Medford Library, Adams Room. Citizens for Peace & Justice, Occupy Medford and the 2013 Hiroshima/Nagasaki Planning Committee are cosponsors. “In 2010, the United States announced the first new nuclear power plant construction in over 32 years. The ‘Nuclear Renaissance’ was born and America’s long-stalled expansion of nuclear energy was infused with new life.” Then on March 11, 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake hit Japan and caused an accident at the Fukushima Power Plant. This film “journeys to nuclear reactor communities around the U.S. to provide a comprehensive exploration of the history and impact...of nuclear power, and to investigate the truths and myths about nuclear energy.”

Local sponsors of the vigil include Ashland WILPF, Peace House, Rogue Valley Peace Choir, Citizens for Peace & Justice, Red Earth Descendants, Rogue Valley Peace Veterans, Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice, Collateral Repair Project, Veterans for Peace-Rogue Valley Chapter 156, One Sunny Day Initiatives & OSDI Japan, United Church of Christ Congregational of Ashland, the Japanese Association of Southern Oregon, JC Pacific Green Party, and SOU United Nations Club.

“We hold these events to inform others of the horrors of nuclear war and its devastating effects on innocent populations and the planet, to remember the victims from all aspects of the nuclear cycle, and to provide opportunities for expression, dialogue and action” said Jill Mackie, a member of WILPF. “It’s so tragic... we continue with the vigil because these weapons, these dangers, still exist.”