



Belfair resident and community activist Michael Siptroth and the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action will protest Monday outside of Naval Base Kitsap in Bremerton. The protest marks the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Courtesy photo

# Belfair activist reflects on U.S. nuclear past

By Molly Walsh  
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Michael Siptroth has been a consistent advocate for human and environmental rights during his decades in the Pacific Northwest. A retired Belfair Elementary School teacher, Siptroth stays busy through his involvement in the Kiwanis Club of North Mason County, as a board member of the Salmon Center and as a member of the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action.

Because of his community engagement, the North Mason resident said he feels a greater responsibility to campaign for a de-nuclearized world. As the anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki approach, Siptroth is co-organizing a weekend of events in Poulsbo commemorating the bombings of the Japanese cities. The events will be a means to remember those lost to the bombings and as a conversation about the future of wartime practices. “So, when we commemorate Nagasaki and Hiroshima’s victims and we say never again,” Siptroth said. “We’re



Siptroth

saying we have to stop this.” The weekend remembrances will include a potluck dinner and discussion Friday, and a vigil followed by a concert Saturday. On Sunday, author, activist and journalist David Swanson will speak and host a book signing. The title of Swanson’s speech is “The Myths, the Silence, and the Propaganda That Keep Nuclear Weapons in Existence.” The events Friday through Sunday will be at 16159 Clear Creek Road NW, Poulsbo. Participation and camping are free. Meals will be provided. For more information, call 360-930-8697.

Beginning at 6 a.m. Monday, a peaceful protest will be conducted in front of the main gate of the Naval Base Kitsap in Bremerton. Included in the protest will be singing, chanting and a dance performance in the street outside of the base gate. The Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action was founded in 1977. The center’s mission includes using peaceful means to advocate for a nuclear weapon-free world. “Unfortunately, we’ve been at this for decades now, trying to stop nuclear

weapons at the Trident submarine base,” Siptroth said. As a part of his activism, Siptroth educates the public about the storage of nuclear weapons in the Pacific Northwest facility, and he says the issue has been erased from the public conversation since the building of Naval Base Kitsap. “We know that nuclear weapons are massively unethical,” said Siptroth. “That they threaten our very existence on earth.” This is not the first demonstration at Naval Base Kitsap opposing the storage of nuclear weapons. Protests of the facility, particularly from the Ground Zero Center, date back to the base’s creation. Points of protest at the Monday demonstration will not just center on the storage of nuclear weapons within the facility, but also the transport of nuclear materials, the potential environmental effects and the governmental cost of maintaining a nuclear weapon program. “In the United States, we have a large number of people who are homeless,” said Siptroth. “Tens of thousands of people without any health insurance, inadequately housed, hungry people.” Siptroth argued that federal nucle-

EVENT INFORMATION:

WHEN: Friday through Sunday

WHERE: 16159 Clear Creek Road NW, Poulsbo

MORE INFORMATION: call 360-930-8697 or visit [www.gzcenter.org](http://www.gzcenter.org)

ar weapon funding can instead be used toward health care, low-income housing, education or transportation needs. Living in a community with a high population of military veterans, Siptroth clarified that although he and the Ground Zero Center have criticisms for the actions of the U.S. military, he is not against people in the armed forces. Siptroth said that his ultimate goal as an activist is to incite change so that the community, including the military, can work together toward peace and a cleaner earth. “We want those women and men in the military to use their talents to help us come up with the solutions that we need for this climate crisis that we have, instead of continuing to build war machines and serve in war machines to destroy the world,” said Siptroth. “We want to save this beautiful planet.”

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THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM News, Opinion, Debate 9-12pm

AMERICA FIRST SEBASTIAN GORKA 12-3pm

THE DAVE RAMSEY SHOW 3-6pm

WEEKDAYS

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