

## Mothers Day Walk for Peace—40 Years!

By: Laura Savinkoff on behalf of the Mothers Day Walk for Peace Organizing Committee

Mothers Day dawned bright and sunny promising to be a day you'd need an umbrella for shade not rain but lots of water to hydrate. Not every year is so blessed with sunshine; many times we've had to use those umbrellas as protection from light rain to actual blowing stormy weather. But we persevere. For 40 years we've met in the grassy area that designates the human made lines between the USA and Canada. From the Canadian side it is Osoyoos, B.C. and from the USA the nearest town is Orville, Washington.

This is a report totally from memory, so I will not go into details, for memory can lead us down the wrong pathway unless we have a guideline to follow, like notes. But I was busy Ming along with LifehasMeaning, with no time to actually make notes and didn't ask anyone to take any either (I'll have to remedy that for next year).

Imagine 40 years of coming together to honour our physical Mothers but most importantly Mother Earth and to plead with the 'powers that be' to stop wars and violence and abuse. To stop the race to Armageddon by continually creating weapons to destroy ourselves and our planet.

This event started as a protest against testing Cruise Missiles by the USA in Canada. We were graced with some of the original organizers again this year, but all are aging and some no longer able to attend and some have passed on. But, we carry on and hopefully will continue well into the future to meet and add our voice to the pleas for a peaceful world.

The organizers began planning in April. Part of that planning was to ensure we have permission from both Borders and know the rules as they do change. Last year, because of Covid, we had to set up so Canadians didn't cross into USA territory. But, this year we even got permission to break bread—no big coolers or fancy foods just sandwiches and finger foods. We've built a great relationship with both borders. We say what we need to say, but we follow the rules so we've encountered no issues or problems for 40 years. We are respectful and therefore the guards are as well.

The Walkers from Orville began at noon and arrived just before 2 pm. The Canadians met at *swiws* Provincial Park  
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(formerly Haynes Point) at 1 pm and arrived at the border just past 2 pm. Many, who are unable to walk, waited for the walkers on the grass; as we age the numbers waiting for walkers increases so we have a good welcoming group. The numbers this year exceeded last year and I'd say there were about 100 people, with many new faces among those who come year after year after year. We hope the numbers of walkers will once again grow. This year joining us were people from Sparwood, Vancouver, Kelowna, Castlegar, the Slocan Valley, Grand Forks, Oliver, Cawston, Vernon, Orville, Idaho and below the Rosslind Border and other areas. And that is good!

We began the afternoon program by inviting speakers and entertainers to let us know of their willingness to share. And our list grew. Some we had contacted earlier but many stepped forward as the program progressed.

LifehasMeaning and I read Julie Ward Howe's Mothers Day Proclamation and a statement from the North Carolina Council of Churches (both were in the May issue of the BPI Newsletter). Sadly, over the years the intent of Julia Ward Howe and Anne Jarvis, was undermined to degrade into a commercialized event. Although it is great to honour our biological Mothers, the Proclamation has been forgotten, tossed aside and the majority have not idea of its original intent. But, not completely for we've been honouring that legacy for the last 40 years. We also know there are other areas holding events, if not at the borders but in their communities. And that is good!

Our first speaker was Dave Cursons, one of the originals that keeps on helping to organize. He took us back 40 years to outline how this all came about and what happened as the Canadians handed over a mock Cruise Missile to our American friends who then placed it atop a vehicle and drove it to military base in Seattle. What a great beginning for an annual event. Dave expressed his gratitude for keeping up this event and hopes for the future so that these types of events would no longer be necessary.

Following was Al Chesdester from Idaho who graced us with song and expressed his gratitude that there are people who care and act to change the war mentality.

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Then we introduced a duo of recording artists, Janet and Ken Bates. Janet was inspired by this event and completed a song that lay waiting for a few years. This was its debut. They shared a couple of other songs. Janet explained how she came to be a songwriter and performer; Because of a need to stop the violence and abuse of war, she was driven to share her thoughts in song and so began a career that has taken them around the world to many demonstrations. Ken, being raised in Grand Forks, with friends such as JJ and other Doukhobors came naturally to activism and so they continue to add their voices where and when they can to bring an end to militarism and all it encompasses.

Joseph Enzensperger shared how he came to be involved. He and his wife, Dorrinda (who passed away a few years ago) were the ones to load that mock missile onto their vehicle and drove it to Seattle. And as the years go by he continues to be involved. He is one of our organizers and he is the one who sets up the awning, the sound system and the chairs every year. And for that, Joseph, we are so grateful.

The next speaker is also one of the first people to be involved, JJ Verigin. He gave an impassioned speech and called on all of us to step forward on a more regular basis to stop the carnage of war and the preparations for war. He spoke about how difficult it is for the Doukhobor people at this time since we have relatives and friends in both Russia and the Ukraine but we are pacifists and therefore we acknowledge the suffering of the people but do not choose sides in the fighting. And then a surprise for everyone (I and a few others knew).

JJ brought out a cake (well actually cupcakes decorated as a cake honouring our 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday). JJ along with a young girl, Tatiana, and Joseph, distributed the cake among the people. And then JJ and Joseph went to both Border buildings and shared some cake with the guards and asked them to join us for a moment. The USA guards were unable to leave their posts but two Canadian guards came to the front and one spoke in support of what we were there for and thanked us for reminding them of the need for peace and for the fact that in 40 years there has been absolutely no problem at all solidifying that peace is possible with communication and respect. The fact that they joined us for even a few moments meant a lot and they were warmly welcomed thanked.

Coming up next was a young woman, Iris Cavanaugh. This lady is the daughter of two original participants. So, she grew up knowing and attending many of these events and values the opportunity to express her deep desire for a world where violence, abuse and war are no longer normal or acceptable.

Next Laura called on the Doukhobor people next to come to sing a couple of songs. It was great to have people ranging from the young to elders come together to join our voices as one family, not a choir but people singing together. Our sang In Honour of Peace and Freedom in Russian and English and this year we had copies for everyone

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Janet and Ken Bates to lead the singing Where Have All the Flowers Gone by everyone. What a sound to project to all those vehicles stopped to get over the border on both sides.

As we called on Rick Gillespie to speak some of spotted a contingent of military vehicles assembling just a couple hundred feet away and as Rick shared his gratitude and concern for how the military industrial complex still rules our world, the jeeps came to stand waiting to cross into Canada. They had no choice but hear what was going on. And then I noticed one of our participants talking with the lead jeep. I took this opportunity, after Rick finished to explain that we were not angry with the soldiers, we had compassion for them for they were only following what they knew and we hoped they would think about a different approach after hearing some of our program and seeing that there are many who do not support war in any form, at any time.

Our next speaker was Rick Gastor, someone who I was not familiar with but he also spoke to the uselessness of war and its destructive nature.

Our last speaker was Buffalo. This man has attended every year for as long as I have, so I'd say he's a regular and every year he brings bottle water labelled 'Peace Water'. But, he said he was not going to speak but instead led us in a participatory song of friendship which all enjoyed immensely. A simple song with deep meaning that brings people closer together.

As we got closer to the end of our day, I made some announcements of upcoming events in the Kootenay/Boundary and invited all to attend.

Laura explained that as an MC it was her and LifeHasMeaning's job to introduce and give space for everyone who wished to share something—and we did. So now it was my turn and so I shared my thoughts with speech will be included in this Newsletter.

And so the day ended with much to absorb and think about. It ended with a promise to be back next year and the one after that and the one after that until war was put to rest. Laura and LifeHasMeaning asked everyone to mark the date on their colanders' for next year and invite others to join us so that we once again swell to the 100s in numbers. And prepare something to share at next year's event. We wished all safe travels home.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Here we are once again pleading for the world to wake up, to stand up, to live peace and justice and equity and honour and respect and dignity and integrity.

Like all those who gave their time and energy before us our pleas are heard. Maybe not by the great majority or by 'the powers that be', but they are heard. They are heard by our children and grandchildren and although they may scoff at us or state that they see no point since nothing changes, at the very least they will know we cared enough to be here every year for 40 years without a break.

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### Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents people of diverse backgrounds officially brought together in 2002 because of our mutual concern for the rise in world conflict. Our mandate is to participate in multilateral non-violent conflict resolution in support of global human rights, ecological and environmental sustainability and international law through education, sharing of information, dialogue and activism locally and globally. We encourage and seek your participation in our mutual work for true peace based on social justice, equality, accountability, integrity, honour, respect, etc in order to build a better world today and future generations.

**BPI web site: [www.boundarypeaceinitiative.org](http://www.boundarypeaceinitiative.org)**

**For info contact Laura at (250) 444-0524 or (250) 442-0434 or email: [L4peace@telus.net](mailto:L4peace@telus.net).**

### UN International Days

**July 1<sup>st</sup>:** International Day of Cooperatives

**July 15<sup>th</sup>:** World Youth Skills Day

**July 18<sup>th</sup>:** Nelson Mandela International Day

**July 30<sup>th</sup>:** International Day of Friendship  
World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

Art is one of the most powerful means of convincing people of anything, both good and bad; therefore, you must be very careful in its use.

*Leo Tolstoy*

Life is not given to us that we might live idly without work. No, our life is a struggle and a journey. Good should struggle with evil; truth should struggle with falsehood; freedom should struggle with slavery; love should struggle with hatred. Life is movement, a wall along the way of life to the fulfillment of those ideas which illuminate us, both in our intellect and in our hearts, with divine light.

*After Giuseppe Mazzini*

### (From last column) **Mothers Day Walk for Peace**

Is that what we stand for here today? Let me hear you say that loud and clear!

Peace Is! Peace Lives!

A cry from the past that still resonates today!

What do we want? When do we want it?

Let's live it, Brothers and Sisters. Today and tomorrow and every day!

Thank you!

In Universal Kinship and Loving Peace,  
Laura Savinkoff.

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They will know that many of us work every day to bring the world to the understanding that life, all life, is precious and must be persevered and protected and not violated, not diminished, not destroyed, not killed. They will know that all of us here, and many others around the world, are doing what we can to stop the murder by nation states of our global family.

I hope that all of us gathered here today do not support war and violence in all its aspects, in all its formations, in all its systemic violations as well as its overt attacks on our human brothers and sisters as well as the rest of Creation—the animals and insects, the birds and the fish, the land, the air and the waters.

Do we support war and violence? Do we support the destruction of the planet? (Asked for response)

So, if we don't support violence and war then we must raise our voices, loud and clear. We must then ensure that any nation or person, who violates another, brings pain and suffering onto another, destroys the livelihood and well being of another that treats anyone with disrespect, dishonours, disavows anyone, including all that exists on Mother Earth, knows where we stand and what we stand for.

So, what do we stand for? What is it we are working, striving, living for? I know I do what I do because I feel, deep in my bones and in my soul and in my spirit, that war and violence, abuse and destruction are not the answer. They never were and are not now nor ever will be. All the wars and invasions and occupations, all the wars on our streets, schools and homes, are not the answer, never were and never will be.

So, what is the answer? Everyone one of us may have a bit of a different take on that answer but it will all boil down to a few. Respect and honour, dignity and integrity and all this comes with personal responsibility but the one most important answer that encompasses all of these is LOVE. Love of other humans, love of Creation, love of self that will give you the ability to love others without exception. That does not mean we excuse abusive, violent or destructive behaviour but we do not use violence and abuse physical, economic, racist or discriminatory means to address that bad behaviour. It is possible! We know the tools are there for the taking. We know that through dialogue that does not use force or fear or threats does work to diffuse and change behaviour. We can accomplish the dream of a life of peace for everyone at all times, if we dare put down the tools that kill, that destroy, that abuse and violate others.

And that is what Julia Ward Howe stood for, that is what she and the women who walked with her stood for. That is what the women of England stood for when they developed the White Poppy. That is what Ghandi stood for. That is what Martin Luther King, Jr stood for. That is what my ancestors, the Doukhobors who burnt all their weapons stood for.

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## WHAT'S UP?

Stay tuned for announcements for the commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days in Grand Forks and Castlegar.



The report on the June 17<sup>th</sup> BPI Conference is forthcoming. Suffice it to say although our numbers were low the engagement left a positive impression on our guest. Plans for a follow up on the issue of climate change effects from global actions and inactions on our local regions are being discussed.

Voice your opinion to the Prime Minister and all MPs. Free postage: {Name of MP}, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Go to the Government of Canada website for MP email and phone contact at: <http://www.canada.gc.ca>

The BPI welcomes your input. Articles may not be common consensus of members. To submit articles contact Laura at **250-444-0524** or **250-442-0434** or email **L4peace@telus.net**.

The BPI is an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace Pledge Union, Abolition 2000, CNANW and works with various local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups.

A portion of the participants since people spread out to find shade wherever possible. (Photo Credit: USCC Iskra Publication)



Canadian Border Guards thanked the Mother's Day Walk for Peace for the cake and acknowledgment as well as showing that peace is possible when respect is shared all around. (Photo Credit: USCC Iskra Publication)



The history of the underdevelopment of Latin America makes up the history of the development of world capitalism. Our defeat was always implicit in another's victory; our wealth has always generated our poverty, in order to feed the prosperity of others. *Eduardo Galeano*

War in this world can be stopped not by the ruling establishment, but by those who suffer from the war. They will do the most natural thing: stop obeying orders. *Leo Tolstoy*

It is important not only to talk about the good life but to do good things. *After the Talmud*