



# Nuclear Watch Tower

“there must be some kind of way out of here . . .”

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NUCLEAR WATCH SOUTH news | SPRING 2021

## U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Standing for Creation, People, and Whales!



Photo © Tasha Wei 2021

(L-R) Glenn Carroll, Hermina Glass-Hill, Teresa Grady, Mark Bowen, Snookie DeMarce, Joanne Steele, Rod Richardson, Beverly Richardson, Michaela Harrison, Tasha Wei, and Calvin Hill celebrate the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the gates of the Kings Bay Trident Submarine Base in St. Marys, Georgia

### by Hermina Glass-Hill

NUCLEAR WATCH SOUTH and Beyond Trident teamed up with Susie King Taylor Women’s Institute and Ecology Center and the Black Coastal Women’s Ocean Memory and Conservation Collective to hold a peace vigil at the gates of the Kings Bay Trident nuclear submarine base in St. Marys, Georgia, celebrating the entry into force of international law of the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to draw attention to the little known fact that 25% of the U.S. nuclear arsenal is deployed from the coast of Georgia.

The eco-groups also celebrated the presence of the critically endangered North Atlantic right whales in Georgia’s coastal waters during their annual calving season with a waterside ceremony led by Whale Whisperer Michaela Harrison. So far this year, 17 North Atlantic right whale calves have been spotted off the coasts of Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. This is a good sign that right here off the Georgia coast a regeneration of this endangered marine mammal is happening!

On January 22, 2021, the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear

Weapons (TPNW) entered into force. Hopefully, this is also a good sign to the U.S. Department of Defense and Kings Bay Naval Base in St. Marys, Georgia, that their job is done!

And so we assembled peacefully in a steady rain at Kings Bay Naval Base to celebrate this reimagining of a world with large numbers of North Atlantic right whales and no nuclear weapons.

The TPNW is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons with the ultimate

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# Standing for Creation, People, and Whales!

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goal being their total elimination. Fifty-three nations have ratified the Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons, and the United States is not one of them.

Dr. King's prophetic speech, **Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence**, delivered on April 4, 1967, at Riverside Church in New York, exactly one year before his death, is a clarion call that should resonate profoundly with environmentalists.

It was an anti-Vietnam War and pro-social justice

speech in which Dr. King stated: *"I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. ... We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered."*

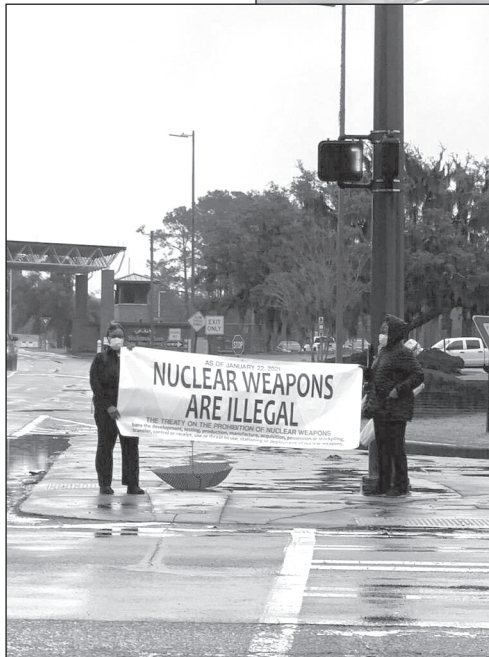
The economics of the U.S. industrial complexes (military, prison, or food) exert the force of the giant triplets on the North Atlantic right whales, and also Black lives for that matter. The murder of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Georgia, by an extralegal vigilante white father-son murdering squad is the same mindset that illegally sets industrial fishing lines into the ocean depths and traps and kills innocent endangered whales.

At Kings Bay Naval Base where the U.S. Department of Defense deploys and tests the Trident nuclear submarine, sonar testing in Georgia's coastal waters and polluting leakage threaten the lives of whales and people, particularly people of color and people in low-wealth communities in Camden and surrounding coastal counties.

Many of the hindrances and obstacles to justice work can be attributed to the hierarchical power structures steeped in



*Nuclear Watch South, Susie King Taylor Women's Institute and Ecology Center, Black Coastal Women's Ocean Memory and Cultural Collective and Beyond Trident vigilled in a steady rain to celebrate the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Pictured (above) Glenn Carroll and Joanne Steele; (left) Hermina Glass-Hill and Bethany J. Campbell; (below) Teresa Grady and Michaela Harrison. Photos by Hermina Glass-Hill and Teresa Grady.*



a wealth-based economy combined with patriarchy which are systemically rooted and grounded in white supremacy.

If only we will connect the dots of the intersectionality of race, materialism, and militarism and integrate a human-based conservation ethic, environmentalists committed to such important issues as nuclear disarmament, climate change, ocean conservation, shorebird migration, air and

water pollution can seize this opportunity as a way to precipitate broader impacts in their overall work.

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*Hermina Glass-Hill is founder and executive director of Susie King Taylor Women's Institute and Ecology Center in Midway, Georgia. She also serves as Georgia Interfaith Power and Light's Coastal Engagement Associate.*

# Savannah River Pilgrimage 2020

by Joanne Steele

BOB BROOKSHER, JESSE STEELE, Stephen Wing, James Sweeney, River Dog and I paddled the east fork of the Savannah River's South Carolina headwaters in observance of the 75th anniversary of the Atomic Age in March 2020.

The Legacy of the Atomic Age on the Savannah River Watershed begins at Duke Power's Oconee Nuclear Power Station. We asked nuclear reactor safety expert Dave Lochbaum to share his greatest concern about Oconee. He said the legacy of highly radioactive waste stored at the three reactors on Lake Keowee most concerns him and he put together a great informational slide package for us to use in spreading the word about Oconee's nuclear waste inventory which is practically next door to Clemson University in SC.



L-R: Bob Brooksher, Jesse Steele, Stephen Wing, James Sweeney, Joanne Steele and River Dog. Photo: Bob Brooksher, 2020

Bob Brooksher and Jesse Steele mapped a course for the pilgrimage from Toxaway Mountain to Gorges State Park, NC; the Foothills Trail to Lake Jocassee above Lake Keowee; then Lake Keowee to the Oconee Nuclear Power Station; and Lake Hartwell to the confluence of the Seneca River and the Savannah River.

On Lake Jocassee we saw the beautiful waterfalls of the three river systems that flow into the lake. We also saw the earthen Jocassee Dam which holds back the deep and vast waters of the lake. The old earthen dam has aroused concern from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as a potential safety threat to the Oconee reactors downstream.

We set up a base camp at Devils Fork State Park, and had an educational retreat with Mary Olson of the Gender and Radiation Impact Project presenting Dave Lochbaum's slides, and sharing her expertise on the big picture of impacts



Bob Brooksher's good friend River Dog is a veteran Savannah River Pilgrim who also traveled the entire length of the Georgia side of the Savannah River in 2015's Source to Sea Savannah River Pilgrimage. Photo: Joanne Steele, 2020

of the Atomic Age. Members of Nuclear Watch South, Foothills Group of the South Carolina Sierra Club, and Ellen Thomas of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, WILPF, were in attendance.

On March 11, in observance of the triple meltdowns at Fukushima in 2011, we screened the movie, **Containment** at Clemson University. Savannah Riverkeeper Tonya Bonitatibus and the late Reverend Willie Tomlin of Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff are featured in the film along with Tom Clements of Savannah River Site Watch and Dave Lochbaum. A huge "THANK YOU" to Jane and Frank Powell and the Foothills Sierra Club for hosting! The very next day the campus shut down in response to the coronavirus. And that also concluded our pilgrimage for now.

We will continue our 2020 Savannah River Pilgrimage below Augusta when we can get together with Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff, Savannah Riverkeepers, and the Georgia Sierra Club Savannah River Group

to paddle the portion of the river bordered by Savannah River Site in South Carolina, and Georgia Power's Plant Vogtle on the Georgia shoreline. There will be a retreat and a paddleboat excursion for non-paddlers on the river and screening of the movie **Containment** in Burke County.

**Containment** is currently available for viewing on Amazon Prime and more photos of our trip are posted on Savannah River Pilgrimage's facebook page.

Joanne Steele is president of Nuclear Watch South board of directors.



Old Pickens Presbyterian Church graveyard in foreground with Oconee Nuclear Site's three 1974-vintage Babcock & Wilcox pressurized water reactors in the background. The three Duke Power reactors do not have cooling towers — they dump boiling hot water directly into Lake Keowee. Photo: Joanne Steele, 2020

# PEACE POLE DEDICATION ~ "May Peace Prevail"

March 13, 2021 ~ Honoring Joan O. King and the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons



# “Survival on Earth” ~ SAUTEE NACOOCHEE CENTER

## Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons ~ Remembering Fukushima at 10 Years



photos by Glenn Carroll, Hermina Glass-Hill, Susan King, Betsy Rivard and Raenell Solter

## Them Ole Bogged-Down Boondoggle Blues

# The \$orry \$aga of Nuclear Plant Vogtle

by Glenn Carroll

IN 1977, A SMALL group of thoughtful, committed Georgians started a grassroots anti-nuclear group to oppose nuclear power, nuclear weapons and radioactive waste and to promote alternative visions for renewable energy and nuclear disarmament.

At the same time, Georgia Power was resuming construction of Vogtle 1 and 2, having nearly gone bankrupt three years earlier while attempting to build a four-reactor nuclear compound with a budget of \$1 billion.

Only 10 weeks after breaking ground, incredibly, Vogtle construction ground to a halt with Georgia Power on the brink of bankruptcy. Georgia Power was saved by two emergency rate hikes thanks to the Georgia Public Service Commission and by selling shares of its hole-in-the-ground Vogtle to most of Georgia's rural electric cooperatives and municipal power systems.

So, in 1977, construction started back up for a two-unit Vogtle with a \$640 million budget. In 1979, the year Georgia Power predicted would see blackouts without more power supply, Georgia Power was instead the most overbuilt utility in the country.

Vogtle was only 1% complete and it was clear that there was no need for additional power, yet Georgia Power stubbornly stuck to its nuclear goals and in 1989, Vogtle 1 and 2 came on-line at a cost of \$6.4 billion — a whopping 1,000% over budget.

There are many compelling arguments against nuclear power: the risk of a catastrophic accident, out-of-control construction costs and the still-unsolved radioactive waste problem. Nuclear reactors produce materials that can be used to make nuclear weapons. Nuclear radiation exposure can cause birth defects and cancer.

And then there's that whiff of corporate socialism arising from nuclear's dependence on government subsidies.

All of these negative factors have spun the present-day global nuclear industry into a downward spiral towards obsolescence. Reactors are retiring faster than they are coming online.



**Experts for the Georgia Public Service Commission are predicting that Vogtle construction will require two years and \$2 billion more than Georgia Power says. Georgia Power claims that the reactor will be on-line later this year while also admitting that they are having to re-do faulty electrical wiring. Progress on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission safety review is extremely slow-going with more than half of the nearly 400 items that must be checked off remaining unfinished. March 2021 Vogtle 3 containment, photo courtesy Georgia Power**

In 2001, 30 new reactors were ordered in the U.S., but the so-called “nuclear renaissance” rapidly fizzled leaving only Georgia Power and Vogtle. Meanwhile, renewable energy, in particular solar power, has become abundant and cheap, and solar and wind have been the fastest-growing energy sector for the past several years.

This is the historic crossroads at which Georgia Power now finds itself building the only new reactors in the United States.

Lessons learned? Let's take a look. Some things remain the same. The unfinished Vogtle project's budget and construction timeline have already doubled, and experts are saying Georgia Power is destined to go even further over budget and miss the deadline. Again.

In the most recent construction monitoring report filed with the PSC, the company claims to have spent close to \$1.5 billion in construction costs over the most recent six months. Those are total costs, Georgia Power only reports its 45.7% share of project costs which are \$670 million for the six-month period.

These skyrocketing costs, amounting to \$8.1 million every day, have gone up, according to Georgia Power because of high absenteeism and the loss of skilled craft and management, at least in part because of having more than 2,000 cases of COVID-19 sidelining workers and crews since the pandemic began in March 2020.

Nuclear Watch South has conducted legal interventions before the PSC to call for the cancellation of Vogtle, showing that

Vogtle is still not needed using Georgia Power's own annual report performance data.

Compiling 10 years of figures from Georgia Power's SEC-filed annual reports tells a revealing story — Georgia Power's electricity sales have not grown as predicted but have declined at an average rate of more than 1% per year.

Georgia Power's existing portfolio of electric capacity is chronically underutilized. Last year, Georgia Power idled 34% of its existing capacity, even after shutting down 3,000 megawatts of polluting coal plants.

Vogtle, if it is ever finished at a projected price tag of \$27 billion, will add a puny 7% capacity — a radioactive capacity that is simply not needed.

But here's the real shocker: Georgia Power's profits have somehow skyrocketed in the midst of the Vogtle construction debacle.

Georgia Power profits jumped by 20% when Vogtle construction began in 2011, steadily rising from the new high watermark. The regulated monopoly posted a whopping 19% profit in 2020!

So one lesson was clearly learned by Georgia Power: It may not have yet learned how to pull off construction of a nuclear reactor, but it sure has mastered the art of making money.

Georgia law empowers the PSC to cancel an unneeded power project. The same law protects Georgia Power to recover costs which were prudently invested in the canceled project, barring fraud or malfeasance.

Georgians do not need to have one more dime extracted from them to build an unneeded radioactive waste factory in these times of economic downturn and ever-present fear of a novel coronavirus.

Here at the crossroads of history in 2021, there has never been a better time to stop Plant Vogtle.

*Glenn Carroll is coordinator of Nuclear Watch South. This story originally ran in the Augusta Chronicle September 2020 and has been updated to reflect current conditions.*

# In memory of ...



Joan King's significance to Georgia's anti-nuclear movement and to Nuclear Watch South is beyond measure. Pictured here, Joan is hiking up Whiteside Mountain to support Source to Sea Savannah River Pilgrimage in March 2015, carrying the thunderbird banner she made for us. Her final action was to contribute a solar array to Nacoochee Presbyterian Church.

Photo by Glenn Carroll

**JOAN KING** was the kind of person one is privileged to know once in a lifetime. Joan King was a Renaissance woman, a person who had many talents and worked hard at making the best use of them.

Although many people thought of Joan primarily as a political activist, she was so much more: a Quaker who sought to discern truth in spiritual matters; a dedicated student of history; a writer of stories and non-political essays; a fiber artist who created amazing one-of-a-kind quilts and wall-hangings; a professionally-trained and disciplined dancer; a thoughtful and unassuming philanthropist; a devoted environmentalist; and

much more. Anyone who knew Joan drew inspiration from her way of giving her best to every endeavor.

Joan King was well known to North Georgians for her newspaper columns in both the **Gainesville Times** and the **White County News** for many years, as well as her countless letters to the editors of various newspapers. She was especially known for her efforts to stop the nuclear-related threats to humankind that she so feared. It's important to note that, whether she was expressing opinions about issues — or displaying her fiber art creations — or publishing a book of her stories — Joan was not someone who sought attention or praise. She was simply working at being her best self.

"She only wanted to make the world a better, sweeter place," wrote Billy Chism, former editor of **White County News**. Joan's voice of reason and compassion — and her presence as one who exemplified the pursuit of excellence — will be sorely missed in this struggling world.

— Priscilla Wilson



Tom Ferguson (right) and Stephen Wing with Tom's "Georgia Power Wheel of Misfortune" protesting in front of the Public Service Commission in 2017. Photo by Kelly Jordan

**TOM FERGUSON** grew up on the shores of Lake Michigan in Michigan's upper peninsula. He says he was a "true believer" who was excited by the B-52 bombers heading to Sawyer Air Force base in Marquette, MI. He joined the army and volunteered to go to Vietnam.

After the war, Tom attended art school on the G.I. bill where his penchant for debate led him into deep discussions with a teacher who helped him to realize "payload" meant "annihilation." He changed his mind and committed his life to social change.

A widely recognized painter, writer and musician, Tom used his

creativity to change other people's minds with powerful artistic messaging on a host of causes, including nuclear issues. He was involved from the beginning with Georgians Against Nuclear Energy (GANE) which became Nuclear Watch South and contributed frequent illustrations, cartoons, props and poster designs. Tom served as Nuclear Watch South's board president from 2009 to 2019.

Tom was a dedicated show-up guy for events, protests, parades and marches, with his signature upended pickle-bucket-turned-drum decorated with appropriate symbols and action statements for the occasion.

Tom and his wife Cyndia Hunnicutt walked the talk, conserving water and energy while raising daughter Kallio in their beautiful old Grant Park home which also housed Tom's studio. He delighted in his two-year-old grandson, Finn.

Tom's distinguished painting career included a major exhibition at Atlanta's High Museum of Art in 1980 which led to exhibitions in each of Georgia's art museums. His 1985 cover illustration about nuclear energy for the **Great Speckled Bird** drew many into the anti-nuclear issue, including myself. Tom's works on paper including his journals and cartoons are archived at Emory University and his complete body of paintings resides in the permanent collection at the Albany Museum of Art in Albany, Georgia.

— Glenn Carroll



Dave Freeman (left) with Jacquelyn Howard at 2017's Get Off the Grid Fest in Blairsville, GA.

Photo by Glenn Carroll

**S. DAVID FREEMAN** was born in Chattanooga, TN, to Jewish immigrants from Lithuania. The son of an umbrella repairman, he earned degrees in engineering and law and went to work for Tennessee Valley Authority. Freeman attracted the attention of President Jimmy Carter with his blueprint for clean energy, **A Time to Choose**, and Carter appointed him to the TVA board where he became the first former TVA employee and the first native Tennessean to direct TVA. Freeman cancelled nine nuclear reactors on order and became known as "America's Nuclear Undertaker."

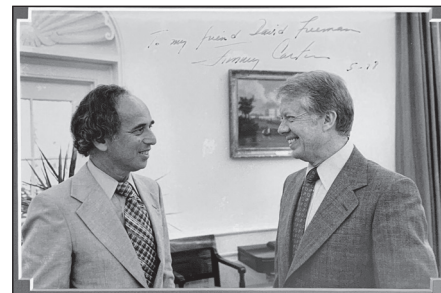
Freeman helped launch the EPA and later managed Sacramento Municipal Utility District where his practical vision for energy efficiency helped replace the power output of Rancho Seco nuclear plant which was shut by voter referendum. Through a refrigerator buyback program, tree planting and other passive solar approaches, Freeman taught consumers to "reduce the juice."

On doctor's advice to protect his skin from the Texas sun, Freeman adopted his trademark Stetson cowboy hat while leading Lower Colorado River Authority in Austin, TX. "The Green Cowboy" went on to head New York Power Authority in Manhattan and Los Angeles Water and Power Department.

Following his decades-long career at the top of publicly owned power companies, Dave joined forces with the anti-nuclear movement, teaming up with Friends of the Earth in two successful campaigns to shut down the last of California's nuclear plants.

Dave keyed our inaugural Get Off the Grid Fest and stepped up again in 2019. We will miss Dave's presence in Chattanooga at this year's Fest. His spirit shines strong and we shall carry on to fulfill his call to make the Green New Deal a reality!

— Glenn Carroll



S. David Freeman and President Jimmy Carter at the Oval Office in 1977. As Carter's appointee to TVA, Freeman cancelled nine nuclear reactors and came to be known as "America's Nuclear Undertaker."

IMAGE: S. David Freeman

# GET OFF THE GRID FEST

2021

August 20-22, 2021  
Camp Jordan  
Chattanooga, Tennessee

[www.getoffthegridfest.net](http://www.getoffthegridfest.net)



photos L-R: solar vendor, Dr. Mark Z. Jacobson, Randall Bramblett (photo by Ian McFarlane), Caroline Aiken (photo by Wingate Downs), Bill Fleming

GET OFF THE GRID FEST, a three-day solar-powered festival featuring live music, eco-friendly vendors, and workshops led by nationally acclaimed climate advocates, is coming to Chattanooga's Camp Jordan, August 20-22, 2021.

Founded in 2017 and taking place every two years throughout the Southeast, Get Off the Grid Fest seeks to expand the concept of what it means to live "off the grid," not just in energy production, but also in practicing sustainable food cultivation and personal health and wellness through herbal remedies and physical exercise.



Get Off the Grid Fest founder Bill Fleming hopes festival goers learn how empowering energy independence

can be. "Living off the grid doesn't mean hiding in a bunker, preparing for a holocaust, and isolating from your neighbors," says Fleming. "It means saving the earth's resources, living sustainably, and having a longer and healthier life, not reliant on corporations. And it takes an entire community to achieve this."

Keynoting Get Off the Grid Fest will be Dr. Mark Z. Jacobson of Stanford University and founder of The Solutions Project. Musical favorites Randall

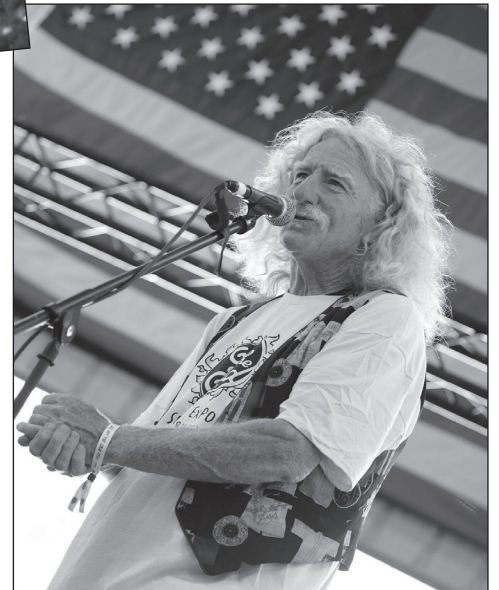


Bramblett and Caroline Aiken lead a roster of nearly 40 acts on multiple stages.

Camp Jordan offers plenty of space for festival goers to practice social distancing for this special event and has camping plus a variety of recreation and natural

areas including Chickamauga Creek watershed.

For tickets and more information please visit [www.getoffthegridfest.net](http://www.getoffthegridfest.net).



Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoyed this issue of the **Nuclear Watch Tower**. Nuclear Watch South was delighted to be able to gather with new friends at the Kings Bay Trident nuclear submarine base on the Georgia coast to celebrate the historic **U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** entry into force of international law! The Treaty comes at a crucial time as the U.S. intends to start a new trillion-dollar nuclear arms race and seeks to expand the submarine base for a new fleet of deadly submarines.

Nuclear Watch South's **Beyond Trident campaign** is gathering momentum. We've invested in information packets to distribute to Black leadership in the coastal Georgia counties with the goal of hosting roundtable discussions about how to diversify the economy. We keep our eyes on the **Savannah River Site** and persistent efforts to build new nuclear weapons there. And we continue our firm opposition to Georgia Power's unneeded **Vogtle nuclear reactors** under construction on the Savannah River. Stay tuned!

Nuclear Watch South is 44 years old! The secret to our longevity and **success lies with you**, dedicated volunteer activists and generous financial supporters. **Please make your tax-deductible donation TODAY** to help us continue to advocate for clean energy and for a future free from the scourge of nuclear weapons.



Donations to NUCLEAR WATCH SOUTH are fully tax-deductible and totally appreciated!  
Use the enclosed envelope and mail to P.O. Box 8574, Atlanta, GA 31106 or donate on-line at  
[www.nonukesyall.org](http://www.nonukesyall.org)