

# INTERFAITH PEACE WALK UPDATES

## JUNE 9 - 16

### SEATTLE to SWINOMISH INDIAN NATION



the banner that will be carried the entire walk made by Toni from San Francisco .... A huge Thank you

The Peace Walk to Vancouver began with an Interfaith Ceremony at the sacred burial grounds of Chief Seattle on Bainbridge Island WA on the beautiful morning of the 9th June 2006. As the group of 20 International walkers circled Chief Seattle's burial site to honor a great leader of the Suquamish and Duwamish Indian Tribes they listened to



Chief Seattle's Sacred Burial Ground

the many prayers offered for world peace and a strong walk.

With strong prayers we walked through the beautiful land of Bainbridge Island to end our day at the gates of the Naval Submarine Base Bangor. The Trident Submarine Base at Bangor, 15 miles west of Seattle is the last active nuclear weapons depot on the West Coast and is the place of deployment for approximately 1,760 nuclear warheads. In July 2005 Lockheed-Martin and the US Navy announced a 9.2 million dollar contract to develop a new submarine— launched intermediate—range ballistic missile (SLIRBM). The SLIRBM will be capable of delivering a 1,000 pound pay load, 1200 miles within 15 minutes of launch.



Gates of Bangor Submarine Base

The next planned direct action at Bangor will be on August 6th and 7th 2006 in commemoration of the 61st anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. For more information: [www.gzcentre.org](http://www.gzcentre.org)

The Suquamish United Church of Christ supported the walk incredibly with providing two overnight stay places and food for all the walkers. Thank you so very much.

Most of us woke the following morning to the usual prayer drums of Nipponzan Myohoji who lead the inter-faith prayers. Its not hard to get back into the routine of the day beginning with prayers, followed by packing, eating, cleaning and saying our goodbyes to the new friends we had made.

Organizing ourselves quickly we gathered at the Dojo of Nipponzan Myohoji before walking to catch the 8.40 am ferry across to Seattle.

We stopped at the Lazarus Day Centre, a homeless shelter for people over the age of 50. After a small history talk Sister Julie offered prayers of thanks and a protected journey.





Sadako Memorial

We walked through downtown Seattle with many people stopping, watching and asking what we were doing. We stopped for “light refreshments” of delicious home baked cinnamon rolls and tea and coffee at the Interfaith Community Church. Taking the back streets and through residential homes we eventually made our walk to the statue of Sadako near the edge of University Bridge. ‘Sadako’ was adorned with 1,000’s of peace cranes and the beautiful colorful gardens made for an impressive sight. We offered prayers, and incense and as we rested on the grass listened to the moving voices of a homeless women “Angel” and Tyler offering their prayers in song.

That night we stayed at St Josephs’ Church and was blessed by a visit from Harold Belmont and his partner. They joined us for dinner and afterwards Harold spoke of the strength of all nations coming together, red, black, yellow and white and the importance of the whole family. He offered a powerful prayer song with his sacred drum and then presented Gilberto-shonin with this drum as an offer of his gratitude for being asked by Gilberto-shonin to support the walk. He called upon the four native walkers, Charlie, Larry, Bob and Daniel to join together in the middle of the circle and each spoke or offered a song of prayer. He then explained their importance and responsibility to the drum during the walk.



Lake Forest for Peace welcome us

From St Joseph’s Church we transported walkers back to Sadako’s Statue and began walking from here to Lake Forest Park. We were on a time schedule to be in Forest Park by 12.00 noon, Utsumi-shonin led the walkers in a relatively moving pace.

As we neared the Shopping Centre the cheering and clapping got louder and louder. Lake Forest Park for Peace welcomed us with such overwhelming excitement and energy gifting us with beautiful peace cranes and providing lunch for us.



Lake Forest Park for Peace and Walkers

**Lake Forest Park for Peace, a grassroots anti-war group holds public vigils for peace every Saturday between 11.00 am to 1.00 pm on the corner of Ballinger and Bothell Ways NE by the Lake Forest Park Shopping Centre.**

Many of the Peace group members joined us after lunch with their great enthusiasm and energy. We stopped for prayers at Margaret’s house near Lake Park Shopping Centre who has just had many of her homes for children with disabilities closed because of residents complaints. Moved to tears from the stories Margaret shared with us of how the children will now go back into institutions because of the insensitivity from residents—each of the walkers offered their prayers.



Walking into Tulalip Indian Nation

Again we had were greeted with the presence of Harold Belmont and his partner, Joy, as we walked into Tulalip Nation. After a delicious snack of homemade cherry pie and cold drinks we had a beautiful ceremony under the arbor by the river. We have been blessed on this journey by the beauty of bald eagles circling near by.

We walked to the Boys & Girls Club, where we would be staying for 2 nights—thanks to Lisa.

Lisa had organized a ‘feast’ and cultural exchange program with the Canoe Family who donated the incredible food prepared for the evening. About 80 of us gathered for a great night of sharing many stories, beautiful songs, drumming and dancing by the young women.

Monday 12th June—Lake Park Forest to Everett

Tuesday 13th June— We walked from Everett to Tulalip Indian Nation and was greeted by Lisa—from Tulalip Indian Nation who organized our overnight stay places for the next two nights and food for all the walkers. It was great to walk in with her nephew and his 3 boys all playing their drums.



Harold Belmont and his partner, Joy

After a few of the walkers shared their experiences of the walk and offering some inspiration to the youth that had come to listen, a local women got up and spoke . She began by saying “I have had a hard day, I have struggled today.....I have breast cancer,

and my husband has thyroid cancer from living out near Yucca Mountain—from the uranium, the nuclear industry”. Everyone in the room went silent, and I am sure was moved to tears as she continued her story. I really felt that the night was more than a cultural exchange—it was a healing circle. A gathering for people to offer prayers, and stories to share, and this is why it is so important to continue these walks. It brings so many people together to share, to become family and to support each other. She said that by coming tonight she felt so much better to see people praying and walking for peace. Of course these are the stories that we remember when we are walking



A sharing of Song and Drums

to continue offering prayers to this women and her family.



We stayed 2 nights at the Tulalip Boys & Girls Club, so from here we walked to Stanwood and then transported the walkers by car back to Tulalip. This was a gorgeous walk over the mountains and through forest to occasionally get glimpses of the water. It's a great time of year to be walking as there are so many wildflowers bursting with color.

The walkers again give a huge thanks to Lisa and the Tulalip Nation for giving us so much support and energy. We hope to return one day.

From Stanwood we walked onto our next stay place through another beautiful part of the country towards Swinomish Nation. Today it was Bob's Birthday—Thursday 15th June— so the morning began with many birthday wishes and excitement. Also through-out the walk we were treated with many surprises. First we rested in a place with homemade Japanese food which we all feasted on. Some local people came out with a donation of fresh strawberries, another person came out with some water, and a local man donated some money to the walk. We had a great lunch place with plenty of green grass to laze about on and beautiful colorful hanging baskets.....with the grocery store donating free coffee to the Aussies!!

We arrived at the Assumption Parish after a huge 20 miles and was greeted by the Tribal Council President, Father Dennis and local members.



Entering Swinomish Indian Nation

It wasn't long before the women who prepared another feast for us told us to gather for dinner. We offered prayers and thanks and sat down to an incredible dinner of salmon, crab, salad and bread. It was a great treat, especially as we had a beautiful birthday cake for Bob to finish off a fantastic day. Happy Birthday Bob!! And a huge thanks to the Swinomish Nation for all their support and energy.

Bob—Peace Walker

Today we rest.

