

# NUCLEAR NIGHTMARES

**T**he B-36 bombers came low over our home in the predawn darkness, rattling the windows and shaking us awake. My mother and brothers and sisters jumped out of bed hoping to see another nuclear test.

Heavily laden with instruments, and of course the bomb, the plane's six unmuffled engines shook the earth with a roar that was music to my young ears. A B-36 could carry more destructive power than all the bombs dropped on Germany in World War II, and the bomber with its accompanying photo escorts had started their final descent for the bombing run at the Nevada test range, 100 miles west of our little farm.

The tests were seldom publicized, and not always done from planes, but our "early warning system" let us see many of the hundreds of open air atomic bombs that exploded in Nevada. Sometimes the tests were canceled at the last minute, since as we found out later, the surface winds and the winds aloft had to be blowing east at the time of "the shot." If they shifted toward California, the bomber would abort its run. This morning, however, the anticipated event took place. The western sky opened with a brilliant white arch, growing into an expanding rainbow of orange, magenta, red, and violet iridescence that filled half of the sky, lasting what seemed like about 15 seconds, then collapsed in descending order into total blackness. Excited, we started counting one, two, three, until the earth shook, and we all laughed and cheered our own private show. We suspected it might be dangerous, but nobody seemed worried about anything, and the

A group called "Mormon Peace Gathering," the first organized group of Mormons ever to participate, conducted a meeting with traditional Mormon songs at the site to object to the proposed resumption of testing. The cur-



*Protesting at the Nevada test site.*

people in the newspapers said atomic energy was safe, had helped us win the war, and would protect us from the Russians.

Over 1,000 atomic and hydrogen bomb tests have been conducted in the United States, more than the combined total of all the other nations in the world, and most of them up-wind from Utah. For years the Catholic Franciscans have conducted a campaign during Lent, a 40-day period leading up to Easter, calling for a global effort by all religions to join them in calling for an end to activities at the Nevada Test Site.

rent moratorium expires in July of this year. Coincidentally, the *New York Times* ran a favorable full-page OP-ED piece the same weekend with pictures of some of the people participating in the Mormon group. The meetings were not covered by most of the Utah media.

New tests will likely result in the resumption of testing by Russia, France, and China, who have said they will wait to see what the U.S. does. Nearly \$2 billion has been budgeted for the first year of testing, since each shot costs between \$30 and \$60 million. All of the testing will be done underground, but since

over half of them leak (in the jargon, a "venting") or are depressurized as part of the test (a "controlled release") there will be plenty of new radiation available for downwinders.

Why are new tests necessary? According to the Livermore California Radiation Lab who designs all new bombs and their tests, we have to continue to test our nuclear deterrent just as you would test a fire alarm or a smoke detector to make sure they still work as they get older.

When I heard of the Mormon Peace Gathering, I decided to go to Nevada to register my feelings. From a personal standpoint, it was good to hear some of the original Mormon hymns finally raised to object to the price that has been paid and will be paid. While there was no "official" church presence, songs such as "Come, Come, Ye Saints" and "Have I Done Any Good" (in the World Today) seemed perfectly appropriate to the occasion. Even prayer, in the face of such powerful forces, seemed apropos. Sheriff Jim Merlino, a veteran at the test site, performed most of the arrests for trespassing and said, "If my children decided to participate in this group, I would be proud to see them do it."

My two adopted children are now the same age as I was when I spent six months in bed from radiation poisoning released from the Hanford, Washington nuclear reactors. My father worked there during World War II, before we moved back to our Utah farm downwind from the open-air nuclear tests of the '50s and '60s. When I was five, my legs swelled up and were so painful I couldn't walk. Mom emptied a large closet near the living area and decorated it as my bedroom so I could be part of the family and eat meals in the same room with them. The doctors at the government clinic thought it must be rheumatic fever, a heart disease that was common in those days. Later, I learned that children in Nagasaki and Hiroshima suffered identical symptoms.

As I wondered how much new testing would effect my children, thoughts of uranium, reactors, and the early pioneers of atomic energy who were subjects of dinner conversation when I was young, came flooding back to me. Sitting in the desert I felt like a visitor from another

time and culture. A time of trust and love. Trust in doctors, politicians, and in our moral and technical leadership; and in the love of my family, community, and pride in our nation. Holding Sunday services in the test site rain-washed some of that feeling away. I miss those who held me when I was a very sick youngster, but who are gone now, and I hope today's young people won't have to endure the terrible loss of another round of nuclear production and testing, in Utah or anywhere else.

—Duane Carling

## RESOLVING AN IDENTITY CRISIS

**Is the Salt Lake Art Center finally on the road to financial and community security, not to mention respectability?**

Since its move in the 1970s from Finch Lane to its current location next to Symphony Hall, the Center has been plagued with an awkward space (those stairs and pillars), some difficult directors, difficult board members, and for quite a while, it was its own worst enemy. For years the organization appeared to aggravate everyone, particularly its largest donors.

The Salt Lake Art Center did have its purpose in those years, however, having survived on a shoestring budget to present some amazing experimental, and educational exhibits.

Insiders marveled at the constant identity crises the Art Center seemed to function through. There was always a question of what it should do, or be, to be considered viable, permanent, and respectable. The question reached its pinnacle several years ago when the Salt Lake County Commission and the Salt Palace Advisory Board began talks about the Art Center's lease, and the amount of rent owed to the County. Planners also talked about moving the Center to the Union Pacific Railroad Depot, or remodeling it and putting in a small restaurant.

Salt Lake County is again discussing the future of the Art Center. The fact that the Center has never been considered completely legitimate by many of those who support the arts in Salt Lake City may be part of its problem, but it is

also a great part of its charm and magnetism. Like the Whitney in New York City, there is a great deal of freedom in exhibiting the untried and not always having to live up to a specific ideal or model. In much the same way, the Salt Lake Art Center has amalgamated art for its patrons over the years and could continue to do so.

Many argue that the Center contributes to the vitality of the downtown and that the County should give it some security in its lease arrangement and contribute money to fix the structural barriers. And, oh yes, about that small restaurant.

—Shar Quinney

## A WELCOME ADDITION

For years I've walked the crumbling streets of Salt Lake City's west side peering into empty store windows and dilapidated buildings, idly speculating and imagining a place where a city once thrived and could thrive again.

I imagine during one of those walks, Artspace founder Stephen Goldsmith was looking out the window of his Artspace home across the lot at the California Tire and Rubber Company building—wondering what could BE.

With a three year waiting list for Artspace, it became apparent that expansion was necessary. Salt Lake City's Redevelopment Agency recently made a \$1 million grant to Artspace for the redevelopment of the California Tire and Rubber Company building. Just as Artspace had sprung from a need for affordable housing, the expansion arises from a need just as urgent. If all goes as planned, Artspace will celebrate its 10th anniversary this year by expanding its boundaries to the California Tire and Rubber Company building.

Artspace founder Stephen Goldsmith feels passionately about this project. More than mere housing, it's a neighborhood at stake. Goldsmith believes that neighborhoods give cities their life and he wants to see the west side neighborhood renewal continue.