



Los Alamos Study Group

Nuclear Disarmament • Environmental Protection • Social Justice • Economic Sustainability

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Hiroshima Survivor, Disarmament Advocates to Attend “Blast from the Past” Weapons Fete at National Atomic Museum

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Ms. Sasamori will be available for interviews and videography on Friday, July 15, at 11:00 am in the garden at the Study Group office in Albuquerque at the address and phone number below.

Activities will begin at 4:30 pm outside at the National Atomic Museum (1905 Mountain Road NW in Albuquerque); events inside begin at 5:30 pm.

ALBUQUERQUE, NM – On Friday and Saturday, July 15 & 16, the National Atomic Museum will mark the 60th anniversary of the first nuclear explosion on earth with an “action packed” parody of the Manhattan project, featuring a cocktail party & dinner, 1940s fashion & car show, and a panel discussion. A “secret identity,” “dossier,” and “secret entrance” will help establish the farcical atmosphere (“Relive the drama, secrecy, excitement, and awe”).

Also attending Friday’s festivities will be Ms. Shigeko Sasamori, who was one mile from the hypocenter of the explosion on August 6, 1945. Ms. Sasamori, who barely survived, was so badly burned that her parents could not tell the front of her head from the back. In the mid-1950s, she received extensive plastic surgery at Mt. Sinai Hospital as one of the celebrated “Hiroshima Maidens,” brought to the U.S. over State Department objections by author and activist Norman Cousins. Ms. Sasamori, now 73 and living in Los Angeles, has spoken widely for nuclear disarmament.

Ms. Sasamori, who is being hosted by the Los Alamos Study Group, will be accompanied by citizens who will disseminate information about the use of nuclear weapons in World War II and other pertinent information. Outside the museum, images of the devastation wrought by the nuclear weapons celebrated in the Museum will be displayed. These images were recently sent by the Hiroshima Peace Museum, which (needless to say) has a diametrically different “take” on the outcome of the Manhattan Project from the museum in Albuquerque.

Outside, the Study Group will be joined by other members of the “Trinity Truth Alliance,” involving several Albuquerque peace and justice organizations including Stop the War Machine and the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice.

The National Atomic Museum (NAM) is substantially funded by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), which designs and manufactures U.S. nuclear weapons. Funding or other assistance is also obtained from the NNSA nuclear weapon contractors and other military and nuclear industry contractors and vendors. Senator Domenici has placed a proposed appropriation of \$2.5 million for the NAM in the Senate version of the Energy and Water Appropriations bill¹; there appears to be no such provision in the House version of the bill.

Like the Bradbury Science Museum in Los Alamos and other nuclear museums currently operating and planned elsewhere in the U.S., the NAM presents U.S. nuclear weapons in a positive light, and minimizes or omits entirely –

- The gruesome and lingering human effects of nuclear weapon use;
- The binding legal requirement for complete nuclear disarmament under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which was ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1970 and has been, since then, the cornerstone of global efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation;
- International legal norms and treaties that made the indiscriminate bombing of cities illegal during World War II (over 60 cities were firebombed by the U.S. in Japan);
- The racist propaganda used to motivate airmen and civilians who conducted these mass murders;
- The economic impacts of the nuclear weapons manufacture and deployment;
- The global environmental devastation wrought by nuclear weapons and nuclear power technologies, which are closely related in the materials production ;
- The moral and psychological harm done to our society by nuclear weapons policies.

Scientifically speaking, the NAM has a great many factual and scientific errors in its displays as regards the health effects of radiation.

Study Group Director Greg Mello remarks, "There was very little new 'science' in the Trinity test, as the scientists at Los Alamos observed at the time. It was an engineering project. That first test was all about making a supremely powerful weapon of war, which was promptly used on cities composed primarily of civilian noncombatants.

"The National Atomic Museum glorifies weapons of mass destruction and the work that creates and sustains them. How can we glorify absolute violence and expect to have nonviolent, peaceful lives? Why should anyone be surprised to find that other nations and peoples are beginning to seek what we have never, despite clear legal requirements, renounced? How can we sow the wind and not expect to reap the whirlwind? There's nothing like glorification of instruments of anticipatory genocide to get the public to accept the threat of mass violence as normative, or at least something too lavishly supported by authorities to bother protesting."

The use of farce and irony in neutralizing concerns while memorializing questionable and sometimes illegal and immoral activities has been pioneered by the International Spy Museum (see <http://www.spymuseum.org/index.asp>).

Important contextual material for the ongoing efforts of the National Atomic Museum to celebrate the bomb and its authors past and present can be found at <http://www.atomicheritage.org/>.

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¹ This year's Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Report, FY2006, at [http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/R?cp109:FLD010:@1\(sr084\)](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/R?cp109:FLD010:@1(sr084)), contains the following passage at p. 164: "The Committee provides \$2,500,000 for the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History [the pending new name of the National Atomic Museum, Albuquerque]."