



Rocky Flats Cold War Museum

# Weapons to Wildlife

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April/May 2007, Vol. 1 # 3      Monthly newsletter for Friends of the Rocky Flats Cold War Museum

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**See [www.bplcarnegie.org/oralhistory](http://www.bplcarnegie.org/oralhistory)**

## **90 Rocky Flats oral histories completed & online**

The stories of 90 former Rocky Flats workers, political leaders, government regulators and activists have been videotaped, transcribed and added to the Web to preserve the fascinating personal histories of those involved with the former Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant. For 37 years, the plant, located about 16 miles northwest of downtown Denver, produced plutonium cores for nuclear weapons.

A new presentation summarizes the themes emerging from the interviews called “The Fragmented Stories of Rocky Flats.” Just completed, it is available to interested groups. It reflects the differing perspectives among workers and others, relating to the plant’s extremely high level of government secrecy, where workers operated on a “need to know” basis. Only they knew their own jobs and were forbidden to talk about what they did, even to each other or their families. The presentation includes photos and key quotes by interviewees about what it was like to work at Rocky Flats during the Cold War and how workers and activists felt about safety at the plant, activism, the Superfund cleanup and many other issues.



The Rocky Flats Cold War Museum board was awarded a State Historical Fund grant of \$37,599 in May 2004 to conduct 75 interviews to capture the stories about the unique Cold War production plant which operated from 1952 to 1989. The plant began a Superfund cleanup in 1995, with decontamination, decommissioning and removal of 800-plus structures. The cleanup was completed in October 2005.

Oral History Committee members (*photo above right*) were able to complete more than 90 interviews this spring with the funding, in collaboration with Boulder Public Library’s Carnegie Branch for Local History, the Maria Rogers Oral History Program. The library and the museum agreed to share the collection, which was added to the library’s web site, [www.bplcarnegie.org/oralhistory](http://www.bplcarnegie.org/oralhistory). Click on Special Collections and on Rocky Flats.

### ***‘Historically significant’ body of work***

“You can listen to an oral history and read the transcription on the web at the same time. The transcripts are also fully word-searchable,” said Ann Lockhart, the museum board president and chair of the Oral History Committee. The oral histories will be used in future museum displays, potential videos, educational efforts and research by students, teachers or anyone interested in Rocky Flats.

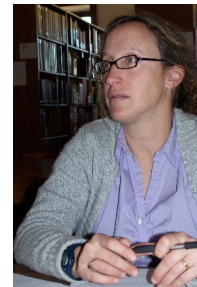
Susan Becker, manager of the Maria Rogers Oral History Program, said the Rocky Flats Oral History Project is “an incredible body of work in its breadth and depth—really exciting.” She said it is historically significant and should prove useful to both researchers and interested citizens who want to understand what went on at Rocky Flats.

Long-time Rocky Flats workers were interviewed including janitors, firemen, security guards, radiation technicians, physicists, plant managers and others. They talk about the unique buildings, adapting to high security and safety regulations, working with gloveboxes, fighting two major fires, union activities, the cleanup and health issues.

Key political leaders such as former Governor Dick Lamm, former U.S. Senator Tim Wirth and former U.S. Representative David Skaggs were also interviewed, since they were frequently called upon to respond to public controversies related to Rocky Flats. Staff from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment were interviewed about their roles in regulating hazardous waste, air and water emissions from Rocky Flats, emergency response and overseeing the Superfund cleanup.

Peace and environmental activists who protested in the 1970s, 80s and 90s discuss reasons for their concerns and details of their activism. They include Daniel Ellsberg (who released the Pentagon Papers about the Vietnam War to *The New York Times* in 1971) and LeRoy Moore, Ph.D., of the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, who is now on the museum board.

Retired psychologist Dorothy Ciarlo, Ph.D., of Boulder (*top right photo*), began conducting interviews of Rocky Flats workers in 1998, as a volunteer for the Maria Rogers Oral History Program. In 2003, she approached the museum board, suggesting that the museum participate in collecting oral histories. Ciarlo and Boulder freelance writers Hannah Nordhaus (*photo on right*) and Nancy Nachman-Hunt conducted the interviews, with transcriptions by Sandy Adler. Susan Becker archived the interviews for the web. Other committee members were Ann Lockhart, LeRoy Moore and Kim Grant. Pat Buffer, former Rocky Flats worker, and Steve Davis, former museum executive director, previously contributed their expertise and assistance.



Any group interested in scheduling the presentation should contact Ann Lockhart at 303-388-6978.

See [www.rockyflatscoldwarmuseum.org](http://www.rockyflatscoldwarmuseum.org)

## Rocky Flats book & film list added to web

A list of non-fiction books, fiction books and films on Rocky Flats was compiled by LeRoy Moore, Ph.D., member of the museum board, and added to the museum's web site.

The non-fiction list includes a history of the plant, photos, poetry, a song booklet, handbooks and reports. Another six non-fiction books include chapters or segments on Rocky Flats. The fiction list includes *Nymphs of Rocky Flats* by Mario Acevedo in 2006, and *Half Life* by Ron Olson in 1984. Two films on Rocky Flats are *Dark Circle* (1983) and *Secrets of a Bomb Factory* (1993). If you know of other books or films to add to this list, please let us know.

## QUOTE


**“I think that if the atomic bomb did nothing more, it scared the people to the point where they realized that either they must do something about preventing war or there is a chance that there might be a morning when we would not wake up.”**

**Eleanor Roosevelt, 1946**

## NEWSBRIEFS

- ☞ **Brainstorming Session May 4th:** Seven museum board members and four guests met May 4 at the Golden Visitor's Center to brainstorm ideas on promoting and fund-raising for the Rocky Flats Cold War Museum. Special thanks to guests Marilyn Saltzman, president of the Susan G. Koman for the Cure board; Lisa Cutter, Public Relations Committee of Koman for the Cure; Jayne Howard, Historic Ft. Logan Mental Health Center nonprofit; Bob Darr, public affairs for DOE; and Herb Bowman, former Rocky Flats Plant manager for Dow Chemical. Board members were Jim Bert, Marion Galant, Kim Grant, Duane Hunter, Ann Lockhart, Bob Nelson and Don Rohlf. They discussed why people should support the museum, obstacles to overcome, fund-raising and special event ideas, and communication and outreach.

- ⊞ **Priorities & Committees:** Planning, fund-raising and marketing are the top three priorities established by the Rocky Flats Cold War Museum Board at the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. The board also created five committees to begin work in specific areas: Governance and Planning; Financial and Fund-Raising; Collections Management; Marketing; and Membership.

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|  | <p><b><i>Meetings/Events</i></b></p> <p><b>Wed., June 13,</b> 5 p.m. Rocky Flats Cold War Museum Board of Directors meeting at 11025 Dover St., Ste.1000, Westminster (northeast of 108<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Wadsworth Blvd.)</p> <p><b>Wed., July 11,</b> 5 p.m. Rocky Flats Cold War Museum Board of directors meeting at 11025 Dover St., Ste.1000, Westminster (northeast of 108<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Wadsworth Blvd.)</p> |
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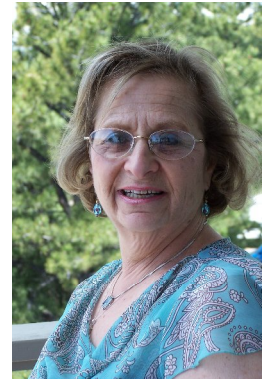
***BOARD MEMBER BIO: Marion Galant***

Marion Galant joined the museum board in 2005 as an ex-officio member representing the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. She was elected secretary in December 2005 and reelected to the post in December 2007. Marion says she’s now “3/5ths retired” from state government, continuing to work for the Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division of the state health department two days a week in community relations on toxic waste cleanup sites. In her spare time she does freelance writing and editing and volunteers the University of Colorado at Denver Alumni Scholarship Committee and for Susan G. Komen for the Cure® in Denver. Marion is a 12-year breast cancer survivor—and counting. She was recently elected vice president for programs for Colorado Press Women. She holds a master of science degree in Behavioral Science Writing from Syracuse University and a B.A. in English Literature from Boston University.

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**Oral History: Rocky Flats Activists**

***Remembering civil disobedience activities at Rocky Flats***

**Abstract:** This recording documents an event held on October 28, 2006, on the site of the former Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant at which the teepee, which stood on the Rocky Flats railroad tracks during the year-long 1978 protest, was donated for use in the proposed Rocky Flats Cold War Museum. Activists who worked for the closure of Rocky Flats through many different approaches (civil disobedience, scientific studies, community organizing, governmental pressure, etc.) gathered for an afternoon of songs, speeches and donations of artifacts for the museum.



Excerpts of the event include quotes from Rocky Flats activists LeRoy Moore, Patrick Malone, Judy Danielson and Eric Wright. Other speakers at the event were Kim Grant (museum board president in 2006), Harvey Nichols, Anne Waldman, Jan Pilcher and Pat McCormick. Read the transcript and listen to the entire recording at [www.bplcarnegie.org/oralhistory](http://www.bplcarnegie.org/oralhistory). Click on Special Collections, then Rocky Flats, then Rocky Flats Activists, **OH1441A-B**. This event was filmed by Hannah Nordhaus and transcribed by Sandy Adler.

**LeRoy Moore:** I work with the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center. I also am on the board of the Rocky Flats Cold War Museum....The museum has the mission of telling the whole story, remembering the whole story of Rocky Flats. (*LeRoy Moore laughs at Anne Waldman’s poetry reading in photo at left.*)

**LeRoy Moore:** It was at Rocky Flats, in those buildings over there, that the plutonium pit, or the explosive plutonium core, of all nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal were manufactured.... Another piece of the story...is the activity of people who resisted...what was going on inside the factory. One of the famous moments in the resistance of Rocky Flats was the occupation of railroad tracks leading into the factory.

Beginning in April 1978 and continuing for just about a year, there was a sustained civil disobedience blockade of the railroad tracks leading into the Rocky Flats Plant. That's a memorable event to me because I had moved to Colorado in 1974 to teach at the University of Denver, and I did not even know Rocky Flats existed. I had been paying attention to nuclear weapons and to Gandhian methods of nonviolent resistance, but it was not until beginning in April '78 that some people sat on the tracks at Rocky Flats. When they were removed from the tracks and arrested, others came and took their place. And that pattern of repeated replacement and continued civil disobedience went on for about a year, sometimes referred to as the "year of disobedience." That's how I learned about Rocky Flats.

I walked out of the academic world and into the activist world. I began to volunteer for the American Friends Service Committee...Rocky Flats has become a second career for me. I've been working on the issue pretty steadily since that time...In that period, 1978-79...That teepee was put on the tracks. It became the kind of most visible symbol of that long-time civil disobedience resistance in that year...We are today receiving artifacts from people that were involved in the resistance activities, and in particular the teepee from Patrick Malone,,, native of Denver who now lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Patrick Malone:** "...when I got out of ...Cherry Creek High School, in 1968, I lived on a ranch at the very edge of ...the Platte Valley here...Then I went to Colorado State University, where I took Protest 101. Protest 101 was sit-ins.....Joan Baez came in, we took over the Student Center. I thought, "Hey, this is easy. I should be able to do this." ...then, I went to the University of Colorado in Denver in the late '60s...they had Protest 200... We learned how to do a lot of protesting there. Later on—I ran for student body president, and in 1974 I was the College of Engineering senator..."

"I know what radiation is like...I was a non-destructive testing radiographer. What that means is, I was like a super dental hygienist. I would take x-rays of metal with radioactive isotopes that came out at a hundred curies...A hundred curies is pretty hot..."

"...when I came out here in 1978, I was working with Rocky Flats Action Group...I came to the west gate here and was handing out leaflets. We were selling buttons, bumper stickers and tee-shirts with Environment Action Reprint Service, which later became Resource Service, a group called EARS....Then I hit the railroad tracks, I thought, "You know, this is a crazy place to live...So I decided to take a couple years off, turned out to be five years, and I decided to become a professional protester... it was a little bit cold, a little bit windy.... I was able to get enough people to come out and hang out, month in, month out. Next thing I knew, it was December. I'd been arrested a few times...When you get arrested, you are changing yourself, and that's what we did to people here...We gave them an experience that changed them for the rest of their lives...."

"I got arrested here 10 times. It was wild, let me tell you. I did about six months in jail...The last four times I was arrested was two here in 1983. I did Vandenberg in 1983 and I did Livermore Lab in '83. I did that with Dan Ellsberg and his wife Patricia. I was changed. Lots of people are changed when they do things like this."

"...What we're building here is a museum that represents both sides of the coin: the workers inside and the movement...Because Rocky Flats was the trigger for the weapons industry. Rocky Flats was the trigger for the protest movement in 1978."

"...We were out here not with nuclear weapons or tank grenade launchers or nothing...We were out here because we felt it was important to take our heart and put it right out there and say, 'No, we don't think nuclear weapons are a viable form of military strategy. We don't think nuclear weapons are a viable form of using taxpayer money.' I have five children...I want my children to live in a place where they're not scared to death. We were scared to death of the nuclear war..."

**LeRoy Moore:** "I had a conversation just a few days ago with Anne Guilfoile...She was telling me that in 1969, she and others had a demonstration here at the west gate of Rocky Flats. That's one of the earliest that I've heard of. I think I heard of one other that maybe consisted of three people in 1968. But it's kind of amazing, because not many

people knew what was going on at Rocky Flats, that it was a nuclear bomb factory, part of a whole complex of such factories around the country that produced nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal....”

**Judy Danielson:** “...In 1972, Pam Solo and I were hired to be American Friends Service Committee staff in Denver. We were looking for ways to connect locally to American Friends Service Committee's national campaign to stop production of the B-1 bomber. Dr. John Cobb, a professor at the CU medical school who was on our committee, suggested the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant because Rockwell, maker of the B-1 bomber, was bidding to manage Rocky Flats.”

”Pam and I...went out to neighborhoods near Rocky Flats and knocked on doors and asked if we could spoon some soil and leaves from their backyards into our baggies. We said we would present suitcases of these soil samples...to candidates running for Congress that year and ask them to have the soil tested...and notify the residents of the results. They were very glad to let us into their yards to collect samples...”

“... We also met with Governor-elect Dick Lamm and Representative-elect Tim Wirth, asking them to make Rocky Flats a priority when they took office. They put together a Rocky Flats Task Force...”

”In 1974 we joined with Maury Wolfson of Environmental Action of Colorado and formed the Rocky Flats Action Group...One committee printed up our Bible booklet, which was called ‘Local Hazard, Global Threat.’ We planned actions and set up a speakers bureau...Pam was a visionary, a student of Mohatmas Gandhi, who had fought a nonviolent campaign and liberated India from British rule. She wanted to create a Gandhian nonviolent campaign to liberate us from the threat of nuclear arms and to begin a discussion in the whole community....the strategy was to organize in as many communities as we could.”

”...We testified at hearings, went to meetings, wrote letters to the editor, held our own hearings at the Colorado Medical Center. We met people like Kay Gable, whose husband Don had worked right under the ducts at Rocky Flats and suddenly died of brain cancer. His brain, by the way, was given to Los Alamos nuclear labs for tests, and later, when Kay wanted independent tests to be done, it was found to be lost.”

”Lloyd Nixon, a farmer near Rocky Flats, came to one hearing with his baby pig Scooter, who had deformed, useless hind legs, and told of his hens laying eggs that never hatched. On further inspection, opening the eggs, he found the chicks with curled, deformed beaks. They couldn't peck their way out of the shell, and they died.”

”We were building a broad movement concerned about Rocky Flats. It included people opposed to nuclear weapons for moral reasons, environmentalists, workers concerned about their own health and also job security, neighbors of the plant concerned about health risks and property values, and social justice advocates who saw how the arms race stole resources from us all.”

”In 1978 we got approval from national AFSC to organize nonviolent civil disobedience at Rocky Flats.... Locally dozens of people participated in the outreach to churches, schools, civic groups and others. We invited a high-level Quaker delegation to come to visit our groups and invited Daniel Ellsberg to come early and meet with the Rocky Flats monitoring committee members, with the Governor and city council, and the Rocky Flats management. We organized a downtown rally before the one at Rocky Flats, where Stokeley Carmichael, of Black Panther fame, local Chicano leader and legislator Rich Castro, and others came to talk about priorities: weapons spending as opposed to spending on human needs.”

”As a result of national organizing...Bill Ramsey drove a flatbed truck loaded with 55-gallon drums labeled ‘plutonium’ starting at Savannah River, South Carolina, and traveling through communities that had production facilities for nuclear bombs as he came to our rally, talking about the issues. The National Resources Defense Council came and held national hearings on the dangers of nuclear weapons production the day after the rally. We did hold the wonderful rally here and the well-planned night of civil disobedience on the tracks.”

”When Patrick set up his teepee and Dan Ellsberg and other activists decided to extend the action, we all had planned into a prolonged presence blocking the tracks, we worried that it and the committed demonstrators on the train tracks would be the focus instead of the issues, and that the campaign could be dismissed. I know this was a powerful, life-changing event for many people... “

”In some ways it made more difficult the task of building on fragile relationships we had developed with unions and other groups, but it was an important event for many. The AFSC continued organizing locally and nationally, and the campaign to end nuclear weapons production in this country seems more urgent than ever today. As more countries are vying to develop nuclear arsenals to protect themselves from U.S. threats of intervention in their affairs, the U.S.

still has intercontinental weapons in silos here in Colorado, poised to hit and destroy any city and potentially set off chain reactions. We have our work to do to eliminate the 'axis of evil weapons.'"

**LeRoy Moore:** "I've got a little artifact here. It's a book called 'Songs to Convert Rocky Flats.' This little blue book ...was actually put together by Judy Danielson...and her husband, Eric Wright, who is coming ... to lead us in songs. One of the things that happened is that the movement had music..."

**Eric Wright:** "...I don't know if any of you people driving up from Denver came around this corner there noticed the herd of cows. They've been an important part of our movement for a long time. So one of my favorites is called 'The Cow Song.'"

**"The Cow Song"** Tune: "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean"  
Words: Terry Sorelle, Eric Wright

In the foothills of east Colorado  
Where the grass grows delicious and tall  
The cows all agree with each other:  
They don't like radiation at all. (So they sing:)

*Refrain:*  
No nukes, no nukes.  
No radioactive junk in my milk if you please!  
No nukes, no nukes.  
We'd rather make ice cream and cheese.

The cows are our friends and our neighbors  
They're part of the working class, too.  
Because of the fruits of their labors  
We've yogurt and butter for you.

The cows are like most other women  
As mothers they work without pay  
But as sisters united in struggle  
They're working to see better days.

The cows don't like strontium 90 (yuck)  
They say that it curdles their cream.  
But they'll tumble the wealthy and mighty—  
Those cows have a socialist dream!

So Rockwell, stop making those triggers  
Before we're all blown up or dead.  
And to use all the skills of your workers  
You can make us new milk trucks instead.

At the next Rocky Flats demonstration  
There'll be one more affinity group.  
You'll know them by horns and by udders.  
They'll be our most militant troop!



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See [www.rockyflatscoldwarmuseum.org](http://www.rockyflatscoldwarmuseum.org)

Send comments and ideas to [ajldenver@aol.com](mailto:ajldenver@aol.com)

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