



The Sun News

Myrtle Beach, S.C., Thursday, March 6, 1986

72 Pages

Swimmers for peace

U.N. staffers to brave cold Atlantic to highlight observance

By **GEORGETTA SHARMAN**

Copy Editor

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The one-mile swim gets under way at 9 a.m. at the Myrtle Beach Pavilion. It is the latest in a series of more than 20 winter swims the trio is making to highlight the United Nations International Year of Peace observance.

The effort began on New Year's Day with a swim in the 50-degree waters off Hiroshima. The Japanese were very impressed, said Dhruva Hein, a UN program coordinator who is handling media relations for the swimmers. About 10,000 people watched, he said, and five days later the swimmers repeated their feat in Nagasaki Harbor for a larger crowd.

Since then they have swum in six states and

Bermuda, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Myrtle Beach swim is part of a series of weekend swims, including one in Wilmington, N.C., Saturday, that will take them up the East Coast, to California and possibly abroad.

The swimmers are Adhiratha (whose name means "Divine Charioteer") Keefe, 38, who swam the English Channel last year to commemorate the UN's 40th anniversary; Sunil ("Infinite Blue Sky") Davidson, 38; and Shradha ("Faith") Howard, 32. Davidson and Howard are training for English Channel swims later this year.

They belong to the Peace Meditation group, which is led by Sri Chinmoy and meets twice weekly at the UN.

The mile-long swim takes 20 to 25 minutes, Hein said, depending on the currents. The trio will swim parallel to shore beyond the breakers and begin and end at the Pavilion. After a meal and some sightseeing, they will head to the Battery in Charleston where they are scheduled to swim at 2 p.m.

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Cold swim



Charles Slate/The Sun News

Sunil Davidson, left, Adhiratha Keefe meditate

Athletes urge people to work for peace

By O. FRASER TURNER

Staff Writer

It was an uncommon sight for March 9.

Two men stood in the cool waters of the Atlantic Ocean with their hands folded for a moment of silent meditation near the Myrtle Beach Pavilion.

Seconds later they were swimming, despite the chilly 50-degree water temperature.

The event was the efforts of three United Nations staffers to promote peace. Adhiratha Keefe and Sunil Davidson braved the cool morning winds and waves for the "International Peace Swim" — their personal contribution to peace on earth.

Another swimmer, Shraddah Howard, did not participate due to an illness, but was on hand to cheer the other two.

The Myrtle Beach swim was the latest in a series of 20 winter swims the trio is making to focus attention on 1986 as the "United Nations International Year of Peace." The two were in Wilmington, N.C., Saturday and in Charleston later Sunday. They are in training for a crossing of the English Channel this summer.

"We are trying to do this so people would begin actively working for peace," the 32-year-old Howard said. "We want to bring attention to the work of peace and let the people in the community know what they can work for peace in their own community."

The pair made the mile-long swim in about 40 minutes.

"We hope our swims can inspire others to attempt to do something exceptional for peace," Keefe said.

The concept of swimming for peace began Jan. 1 in Japan when the New York natives swam two kilometers around one of the country's most sacred sites — the shrine on Miyajima Island. Five days later they repeated the swim in Nagasaki Harbour.

"We're hoping to make people more aware of what the U.N. is doing for peace and to inspire others to make their own efforts for world peace," Keefe said.

Funding for the peace swims comes from the salaries of each participant. "This is something we do strictly on our own," said Dhruva Hein who also travels with the group. "We use our own money."

The swims have also taken them to Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, North Carolina, Virginia, and Bermuda.

Later this month they will visit Mexico, California, and Arizona.

The trio belongs to the Peace Meditation Group which meets twice weekly at the United Nations under the leadership of Sri Chinmoy, spiritual guider of the group.

"He has taught us to have peace and oneness with the whole world," Hein said.

Howard and Davidson are UNICEF staff members at the U.N.; Howard is a color lab technician.



Myrtle Beach

South Carolina

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Myrtle Beach to host United Nations' mile-long 'peace swim' March 9

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It's the latest in a series of more than 20 winter swims the trio are making to focus attention on 1986 as the "United Nations International Year of Peace."

The three began their peace journey Jan. 1 with a one and one-half mile swim off Hiroshima, Japan. As thousands of Japanese lined the shore, they swam around one of the country's most sacred sites: the shrine on Miyajima Island. Five days later they repeated their swim in Nagasaki Harbor.

Since that time, they have swum in six states and Bermuda, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Myrtle Beach swim is part of a weekend series that will include Virginia Beach, Va., Wilmington, N.C. and Charleston, S.C.

"We're hoping to make people more aware of what the UN is doing for peace and to inspire others to make their own efforts for world peace," says Adhiratha Keefe, one of the swimmers.

Keefe, a 38-year-old UNICEF employee, whose first name means "divine charioteer," swam the English Channel last September to commemorate the UN's 40th an-

niversary. Over 4,000 people have attempted to swim the Channel, but less than 400 have completed the difficult crossing.

The two other swimmers are Sunil ("infinite blue sky") Davidson, 38, also of UNICEF, and Shradha ("faith") Howard, 32, of the United Nations Secretariat. Both are training for English Channel swims later this year.

The three swimmers belong to the Peace Meditation group, which meets twice weekly at the United Nations under the leadership of spiritual master Sri Chinmoy, and attribute the inspiration for their peace swims to Sri Chinmoy. He has been leading these peace meditations for UN delegates and staff since 1970 in an effort to create a spiritual basis for the drive toward world peace. Two years ago he embarked on a global peace concert tour to bring a new peace momentum to this effort.

In addition to the Peace Swims, the Peace Meditation sponsors several silent Peace Walks at UN Headquarters and around the country, as well as Seven Minutes of World Peace, a global simultaneous observance of silence on October 24, UN Day. Information about these and other events can be obtained from Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the UN, Room S-765, United Nations, NY 10017.

Myrtle Beach's Favorite Newspaper

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