Kicking the Nuclear Waste Cannister Down the Road

E
er since December 18, 1957, when the turbines started spinning at the Shippingport, Pennsylvania Atomic Power Sta-
tion, Americans have been able to open and close garage doors, crank up the air conditioning, and turn on the music—
all using power generated by nuclear fuel rods. But there’s a
cost to this electric output: the spent fuel rods are hot, in both
the senses of the word. Their dead-
liness will decline gradually over time, though. Eventually they will present less of a threat—
about a million years from now.

All this time, proponents of nuclear power have been assuring the public that the waste would be disposed of in some safe manner to be determined eventually. Un-
til that day comes, the spent fuel rods will continue to be stored in pools of water near the 100 or so nuclear reactors currently generating electricity at 30 or 60 nuclear power stations around the country.

In 1992, Congress finally con-
verted that vague promise into a concrete decision. The Nuclear Policy Act (NWPA). Since most Americans would rather live next to a pig farm than a hot, glowing pile of nuclear fuel rods, the NWPA was anything but easy to write.

The American West, with its wide, open spaces, was the logical place to put something no-
obody wanted to be near. Most of the country’s nuclear power plants, however, were located in the East. Many westerners felt it would be unfair to be saddled with a nasty burden they did not create. And many western Sena-
tors thought it would be political suicide to vote for such a plan.

Perhaps for that reason, the NWPA included parallel pro-
cesses for selecting two sites for nuclear waste dumps: one in the
West and one in the East. Seventeen granite-rich states in the eastern U.S. were deemed suit-
able for a nuke dump. Predict-
ably, “The Granite State” was among them.

In 1986, the Department of Energy (DOE) began work
in earnest—or so it seemed—on the Crystalline Repository Proj-
ject. Unfortunately, the project was never funded. There was the cost for a high-level bridge
includes this item: determining suitability of the granite for a nuke dump. Predict-
ably, “The Granite State” was among them.

During those five months state geologists had quickly assembled a good deal of evidence suggest-
ing that the granite of the Car-
digan Pluton was thick enough to hel-
the cracks were full of wa-
ter, and the water was going to move to water at any moment. It seems unlikely, though, that with an additional 79 months of already-approved funding avail-
able, the DOE would quit based on that.

Cynics maintained that the program was shut down because it had done its real job: it had given western Senators enough political cover to let them vote for the NWPA without being accused of selling out their con-
stituents to the nuclear power industry.

And sure enough, after a bit more legislative backing and fill-
ing, Congress agreed to bury all those nasty fuel rods in a place where the constituents prob-
ably glow in the dark already: under Yucca Mountain in Ne-
vada, about 17 miles southwest of where about 1,000 nuclear weapons were tested between 1951 and 1992.

The DOE had begun thinking about a nuke dump at Yucca Mountain in 1987. By
now it had spent nearly $14 bil-
lion on the project. Until recent-
ly, the anticipated lifetime cost of
managing the fuel rod gray area was estimated at just over $96 billion.

Recently, though, the Obama administration proposed a bud-
get that would cut funding for Yucca Mountain down to a lev-
el just high enough for project managers to respond to queries from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

There are several reasons why the new administration pulled the plug on Yucca Mountain.

For one thing, geological stud-
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vada, about 17 miles southwest of where about 1,000 nuclear weapons were tested between 1951 and 1992.
Six years have passed since March 20, 2003, when U.S. troops crossed the border into Iraq to remove the threat to America posed by Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction, his nuclear weapons program, his biological weapons program, &c., &c. In another five weeks, it will be the Sixtieth Anniversary of George W. Bush’s “Mission Accomplished” address on the deck of the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln. Yet people still find cause to mark the date with protests. This one took place in Market Square on Thursday, March 19.

On February 9, 2009, the Portsmouth Herald ran a story headlined, “Portsmouth Naval Shipyard payroll puts $360M in economy.” In other words, the entire $700,000 a year maintenance cost of the SML Bridge is less than a single day’s payroll from the Shipyard.

There is some good news on the bridge front: we can add another link; but it makes perfect sense waiting for further information as to what we can do or how we can help in the efforts of revitalizing the bridge. Let’s save this landmark! Dick “Dick” Cheney’s Got a Big Surplus

On March 11, Eric Black at MinnPost.com reported that President Barack Obama is “Dick” Cheney. From the context of Hersh’s remarks it was clear that he was referring to U.S. special operations personnel operating in Iraq and Afghanistan. Cheney also said that “the Central Intelligence Agency was very deeply involved in domestic activities against people they thought to be enemies of the state. Without any legal authority to act, they haven’t been called on it yet.”

A few days later, Cheney was interviewed on CNN’s program “State of the Union.” Asked by John King how the Bush administration had managed to turn a record surplus into a record deficit, Cheney explained, “Stuff happens.” Cheney also asserted that President Barack Obama is “making some choices that, in my mind, will, in fact, raise the risk to the American people of another attack.” The interview took place on the Ides of March.

On Another Topic Entirely…

As for us, for reasons we can’t quite put a finger on, we thought we’d start working on a list of people whose untimely deaths over the past, say, eight years could be called politically convenient for certain parties. So far we have: Mike Connell, who provided Internet services at various times to the White House, the Republican National Committee, and Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell. Connell was scheduled to testify about irregularities in Ohio before his plane crashed on Dec. 19, 2008.

Bruce Ivins, who was a researcher at Fort Detrick, MD, and an investigator of the 2001 anthrax terrorism incident—until about 2006, when he became a suspect. Ivins, a devout Roman Catholic, was found unconscious on July 27, 2008, and died two days later, ostensibly of a “nol™ overdose. No autopsy was performed.

David Kelly, who was a British expert in biological warfare. In off-the-record interviews with
Kelly was found dead in woods a mile from his home early on the morning of July 18, 2003. His blood contained about one third of a lethal dose of the analgesic co-proxamol, and one small stone (D-MN), who was campaigning for a third term when his small plane crashed on Oct. 25, 2002, now disappeared. It’s a shame. That last bit sure sounds like Our Bob. Sadly, the site has what the heck is going on?”

Kevin Phillips Speaks in Portsmouth

Writer Kevin Phillips will speak at Seacoast Repertory Theatre on Tuesday, April 14 at 7:30 p.m. Anyone interested in a sane, rational, and extremely well-informed explanation of how the world’s strongest economy got wrecked on the rocks ought to show up early to make sure to get a seat.

Without Phillips as his senior political advisor, Richard Nixon might not have slithered into the White House in 1968. Phillips predicted the nation’s ensuing conservative realignment and the rise of the “Sun Belt.” About the only thing he didn’t see coming, apparently, was the amoral and destructive direction the Republican party would take. Over the past ten or fifteen years, he seems to have been making up for his past sins by writing books explaining, as only a true insider can, how the dirty deeds were done. His newest, Bad Money, is now out in paperback. According to the promotional material, it delves into “asset-backed securities and collateralized debt obligations … the risk-taking of buccaneering institutions like hedge funds [and the] extent to which U.S. home ownership has been hotwired to experimental finance.” Bad Money places these unseemly shenanigans in a disturbing historical context.”

Make The 10% Shift

The best defense against a national economy gone haywire is to buy local. And SeacoastLocal.org is making that easy with ‘The 10% Shift.’

“If the five million households in New England shifted 10% of their existing purchases from non-local businesses to Local Independents (locally owned and independent businesses),” they say “we would see thousands of jobs restored, billions of dollars circulating in New England, and much more.”

News Briefs to page four
Moving Pictures

The Redgrave Dynasty

by Rodman Philbrick

The sad occasion of the accidental death of Natasha Richardson provides an opportunity, however melancholy, for a review of an enduring theatrical dynasty. We begin in the 19th century with a notorious back playwright named Fortunatus Augustus Dvine Scudamore, whose name has disappeared, leaving just a few details: he was the father of stage actress Daisy Scudamore (there are conflicting stories), who was ever-so-briefly married to one Roy Redgrave, an early silent film actor. Roy, who had, shall we say, a complicated romantic life, hung around just long enough to father a child before he left poor Daisy for Australia and ingenuity unknown. The child was christened Michael, and eventually grew up to be Sir Michael Redgrave, one of the most respected stage and screen actors of his generation. The Stars Look Down, filmed in 1940 by director Carol Reed, made Michael Redgrave famous even in the remote colony of Hollywood. Based on the A.J. Cronin novel about the perils of coal mining, young Mr. Redgrave stars as a local boy who wants to make good but keeps messing up before he learns how to stand and be counted. Greedy owners, flooded mines, trapped men. Lots of sweaty, gritty drama deep in the heart as well as under the earth, and well-regarded enough to make the list of the 1,000 best films ever made. Long before he was knighted in 1959, Michael Redgrave had the good sense to marry a talented, beautiful actress named Rachel Kempson and father a trio of talented kids (Corin, Vanessa, and Lynn) of whom Vanessa is the most famous—some would say infamous, given her comments about Jews and Zionists in the not too distant future. The dynasty continues. Blood will out.

Sir Michael's other daughter, Lynn Redgrave, may be more conventional politically, but she's had a long, productive career in stage, film, and television. Early on she snagged a 1966 Academy Award nomination for her complicated romantic past. She's a mere twelve years older than John Hensley, who plays her son. She leaves two nieces of Lynn and Corin, cousin of Jemma Redgrave, and spouse of Liam Neeson. She leaves two boys, Michael, 13, and Daniel, 12.

Natasha starred in The Handmaid's Tale, Waking Up In Reno, Asylum, The Parent Trap, Maid In Manhattan, among many others. She was the granddaughter of Sir Michael, daughter of Vanessa, niece of Lynn and Corin, cousin of Jemma Redgrave, and spouse of Liam Neeson. She leaves two boys, Michael, 13, and Daniel, 12.

Order Your Gundalow-Delivered Rain Barrels Now

The Gundalow Company and the Gundalow Project (SCWIP) are teaming up to help Kittery and Eliot residents conserve water, save money, reduce stormwater runoff and help prevent soil erosion: they’re selling Skyjuice rain barrels at the discounted price of $75 ($50 off). Rain barrels are used to collect water from the roof when it rains and store it for use during dry weather to water houseplants or outside plantings. Collecting water in a rain barrel is an excellent way to save some of the runoff and take the pressure off our water supply and stormwater management systems. By using the rainwater on your gardens you are helping to replenish your groundwater and benefit the town’s water system. So, one inch (inches) of rain on 1,000 square foot roof yields 562 gallons of water. A quarter inch of runoff will easily fill a barrel. Five rainy days can provide 275 gallons of free water. Collected rainfall is especially valuable during droughts or dry conditions. It contains more nutrients and less salts than tap water, so it’s great for plants. Skyjuice rain barrels are made from 60-gallon recycled food grade barrels in a variety of colors. The fully screened intake port keeps mosquitoes, insects and debris out. The lid can be removed for easy cleaning and for storing hoses inside the barrel during the winter. The solid brass threaded spigot can be connected to a regular hose or soaker hose. The overflow connector and tubing can be used to direct water away from the foundation, helping with flooding or erosion issues, or to join multiple barrels for additional storage capacity. SCWIP and the Gundalow Company are taking orders through May 1, 2009, and have scheduled a rain barrel pick-up day on Saturday, May 16th at the Kittery Point Town Pier (90 Pepperell Road, Route 103, behind Frisbee’s and Cap’n Simon’s) from 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Best of all, the barrels will be delivered to the site aboard the venerable gundalow Captain Edward H. Adams.
The Latest in Illiteracy

by William Marvel

I
ever learned to type. That may sound surprising to someone who makes his living as a writer, but I was 26 before I began the laborious production of final drafts on a manual typewriter. It pulverized my cuticles to hammer out hundreds of pages with my index and middle fingers, so I started typing with pencils, turning them upside-down to punch the keys with the erasers. That required me to occasionally blow the eraser crumbs out with a compressor, but it was nearly two more decades before I switched to a computer, and by then my four-fingered system was established and entrenched.

My education began at the tail-end of the handwritten era. Government agencies had begun routinely typing their preponderance of their official correspondence barely half a century before, but it was still considered gauche to type personal letters, and even the replies to formal letters often consisted of longhand notes scribbled beneath the typed text, which saved a sheet of paper and a good deal of time. Thanks to an attentive mother who learned to write under the tutelage of nuns wielding oak rulers, I had already begun practicing her flowing Palmer script a year or more before entering Pine Tree School. Unless I'm hurring, or writing on my knees, that penmanship—my mother's penmanship, with the exception of a couple of capitals—still spills from the tip of my pen. Despite arthritis in my fingers I still often hear compliments on what I consider a rather plain and straightforward style; a lot of the manuscript material that I work with is written in a much more artistic Spencerian hand.

Thanks in large part to the obsessive commercial practicality that drives American education, perceived frivolities like legible handwriting and good spelling have suffered as schools immerse ever-younger students in the technological tidal wave. The demands of No Child Left Behind may leave little time to teach penmanship, as many teachers reportedly complain, but handwriting was deteriorating in the elementary grades before a marginally literate president ever blighted his native land.

Among adults I've known, poor handwriting often seems to accompany other symptoms of dyslexia. I've also noticed, when I've been unfortunate enough to encounter them, that conspicuously passively aggressive people frequently produce indecipherable scrawls—and I've wondered whether that hints at a defiant subliminal refusal to communicate. My stepson could not even write his own name legibly as he approached his teens, and his school papers looked like pieces of carpet thread dropped haphazardly on the page. At first I associated it with my aforementioned observations, but then I realized that poor handwriting is so common to his generation that many of the high school teachers who still bother to correct student papers require them typed.

A National Public Radio education reporter recently predicted that cursive handwriting is on the way out of American schools altogether, not only because there is so little time to teach it but because it no longer seems relevant. So long as the citizens of the future travel with laptops, printers, the right paper, and an electrical source, the ability to write in something other than the block letters of kindergarten may well seem superfluous. It's a short step, however, from an inability to write in some curious form to an inability to read any cursive form, and that process has apparently already begun in this household. My stepdaughter, who prefers a miniscule and slightly modified form of printing, complains that my handwriting is too "flowery" to read.

For such extremism while the economy crashes and burns and while our students try to live up to F-rated academic standards. Is this what the Democratic Party has become? One thing is for sure, this year has been quite an eye opener for many NH residents. Clearly it's all about promoting an extremist agenda. I wonder how the families who've lost their jobs, had their wages frozen and face financial hardship are feeling right about now. Ann Marie Banfield

Bedford, NH

Marcosa Santiago MD
Runnym NH —

The NH Democratic Party Dear Editor:

We are living through one of the worst economic disasters in my lifetime. The economic crisis should be a top priority for all politicians in New Hampshire. However, if you look at the legislation that’s been proposed by Democrats, you’d think they had no idea what’s going on.

Just look at some of these Bills they’ve introduced. Gay Marriage, The Bathroom Bill which allows Transgendered men/women to use the opposite sex bathroom with small children present, and Physician assisted suicide which gives doctors a license to kill.

Have they not turned the TV on to notice the headlines every night? On top of the financial crisis, NH still has some of the poorest academic standards in the country.

Where are the Democrats on important issues like the economy and education? No where to be found. Where is the Democratic Leadership? Running around trying to make excuses just as puzzling as 19th century Democrats who made excuses to kill.

The Editor

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Let’s Give Salvador a Hand

Dear Editor,
Hello! My name is Salvador Martinez. I am a fifth grader at Napa Valley Language Academy in Napa, CA. The reason why I’m writing to you is because my class is working on state reports, and I have chosen your amazing state, New Hampshire.

I would really appreciate it if you posted my letter in your newspaper so that I can get all the help I need for my report. I will be writing about your state’s history + economy, agricul- ture, history, historical places/ figures, National Parks, etc. I will also be doing a Power Point pre- sentation.

What I need from you or your readers are pamphlets, brochures, magazines, postcards, souvenirs, or any information that repre- sents your state.

Thank you so much for helping me be a great researcher of your beautiful state.

Sincerely,
Salvador Martinez
c/o Maestra Hernandez
2700 Kilburn Ave.
Napa, CA 94558

Dear Salvador:
We hope this helps—best of luck!

The Editor

Shania-Tara Working for Us

Dear Editor:
Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter has helped to obtain for New Hampshire $9.7 million through the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program. The JAG program pro- vides funding for local and state governments to help them keep residents safe and improve their criminal justice systems.

In a statement, Shea-Porter said, "New Hampshire is consid- ered one of the safest states in the nation and it is important that we keep it that way. This funding will provide law enforcement offi- cials with the tools they need to prevent crime.

I deep a little easier knowing that Congresswoman Shea-Porter takes crime seriously and is working on state reports, and I have chosen New Hampshire citizens. Fran Gehling

Londonderry, NH

The Zions’ Self-Defeating Smear Campaign

To the Editor:
The apalling smear campaign by the Zionist lobby against Charles Freeman resulting in his bowing out from consideration as Secretary of the National Intelli- gence Council—clearly under pressure from the Administr- ation—offers proof as never be- fore of the power of the lobby to influence domestic affairs within the United States.

Friends of Israel will assert that AIPAC—the entity that has been hugely successful in advancing the notion that the in- terests of Israel and those of the United States are wholly con- tradicted—had nothing to do with Freeman’s withdrawal. Rather, they will offer absurd arguments such as his suitability for the post was called into question owing to his ties with Saudi Arabia and his purportedly accommodative stance towards China and its hu- man rights.

At bottom, the Zions were terrified that a man of Freeman’s intel- lect and capacity to under- stand the position of the powerful parties at the same time might sway the United States towards a more balanced policy regarding Israel and the Palestinians.

What they don’t seem to com- prehend is that Israel cannot possibly survive in its present incarnation. There are many Israelis grasp while most American Jews do not. If noth- ing else, demographics make this inevitable. But in the nearer ho- rizon, Israel has chosen to serve as a tripwire for the next nuclear exchange on the planet, as wit- ness its saber-rattling concerning Iran. The latter country can likely survive nuclear strikes, but tiny Israel cannot.

Freeman understands this, and, curiously, he would have emerged as a protector of Israel, not an en- emy. That the Zions chose to reject him is strong indication that they are bent on consigning Israel to a Masada- like end.

R.G. Adams
Portsmouth, NH

Punishing Bernie Madoff

To the Editor:
Bernie Madoff, who ran the most successful Ponzi scheme uncovered to date, is now one of the best known people in the United States. He is a celebrity and they are going to put him in jail for rich celebrities.

So—you think he should be punished? What will be the consequence? How will it affect other people?

The first scenario is that of hard working citizens doing their best to provide themselves and their family with a basic necessity of life, when suddenly ill- ness, or more likely the loss of a job, makes it impossible to continue meeting their mortgage obligations, and the prospect of becoming homeless is now a very real one.

But there is another reality. There are those who purchased a home, then when the home increased in value, they took the equity out to support a lavish lifestyle that included, among other things, home theatres, new cars, a boat, and expensive vaca- tions. That's fine—so long as they value they want to keep their toys, have their principal reduced to the current value, and finance it at a lower rate. And if the mar- ket continues to fall, they would be re- warded when the house returns to the original value and they are able to take out additional eq- uity. Wouldn't you?

Get him a booking agent for speaking gigs and make him fly around the country where, at least in the next year, he’ll be on- going and if heconned all those smart people, wouldn’t? Use the five to ten thousand dollars he will get for each of his en- gagements to make at least a to- ken refund to some of the people he defrauded. Can he be more service to society by running up $100,000 or so in tab in one of our privatized we-run-it—for- profit prisons?

And if you want to be sure he is really suffering, spend a win- ter in Port Clyde or a summer in Florida.

Robert Skoglund

The humble Farmer
St. George, ME 04860

Dear humble:
Sounds like cruel and unusual—what a pity it had to be—because it’s got a lot of merit.

The Editor

Rick Santelli’s Rant

To the Editor:
Rick Santelli rants, and you rant about his rant, yet both sides present the same side argument. This is wrong. Because there are two realities and two legitimate perspectives, not one reality with a few people who are right and thousands who are wrong. This is because there are two differing perspectives. And both sides are wrong—and both sides are right. This is because there are two differing perspectives.

What they don’t seem to com- prehend is that there are two differing perspectives. And both sides are right—and both sides are wrong. This is because there are two differing perspectives. And both sides are right—and both sides are wrong. This is because there are two differing perspectives. And both sides are right—and both sides are wrong. This is because there are two differing perspectives. And both sides are right—and both sides are wrong. This is because there are two differing perspectives.
Cold Star families felt an urgent need to reach out to the larger peace/anti-war movements to make our position on Iraq clear during this time of political and economic uncertainty. Iraq Veterans Against the War,* Military Families Speak Out** and Veterans For Peace*** continue to stand together in our demand to Bring the Troops Home Now! We ask all those who have stood with us in the past to stay faithful to the cause.

President Obama has announced a plan to gradually reduce troop levels in Iraq. Many in the peace/anti-war movement are breathing a sigh of relief, and suggesting that it is time for us to scale back our efforts to bring an end to the occupation of Iraq. But for our troops on the ground, their families and the Iraqi people, the nightmare continues. In 2003 the invasion of Iraq was a step too far. In 2004 the occupation is now a permanent reality. None of our military, veterans and military families struggle to put food on the table and get decent housing and adequate medical care. Women and men and children left behind in this country are often forced to fight tooth and nail to get health care from an underfunded and overburdened Veterans Administration. Hundreds of thousands of veterans are homeless. The occupation of Iraq is the sound of music and silence, not the solution. Living under occupation the people of Iraq are held by the American military and their allies. Iraq is a desert country and the sand is both desert and water. The continued U.S. military presence there is a cause of the violence they face, not its solution. U.S. military interference contradicts the principles of democracy and self-determination our country was founded on.

President Obama has announced a plan to gradually reduce troop levels in Iraq and we will continue to keep pressure on Congress and the President to bring all our troops home from Iraq. NOW, ensure that veterans receive the care they need and deserve, and that the U.S. provides resources to rebuild a country we destroyed. But we cannot do that alone. We need your help to reach out to the vast majority of the American people who are completely isolated from the realities of this war. Please don’t abandon this struggle or shift your position before the occupation is over and your vet families and the Iraqi people are on the path to healing.

Mike Werner, Toledo, OH

Boeing Unveils New International F-15

To the Editor:

Hmmm ...sell the most advanced 4th Generation Fighters (F-15, F-16) to other countries and then argue we need 5th Generation Fighters (F-22, F-35) to outperform them, then do the same with the 5th to the 6th. It still bewilders me that Boeing, Lockheed and others get tax money to develop and produce fighter planes. Why? Don’t we already have a ton of huge profits and then sell planes etc. to other countries at a huge profit, sometimes with tax money (i.e. Israel).

Chris Lane Gray
Monticello, AR

JIEDDO

To the Editor:

When last we heard of JIEDDO, they were improving their UAV’s to counter IEDs, and they were “too cryptic.” Well, JIEDDO-Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization; UAV-Unmanned Aerial Vehicles; IEDS= Improvised Explosive Devices, all could be done by 2006, the earlier date with the 5th generation, now with 6th generation. But if you don’t already have a full complement of 5th generation fighters, why would you need 6th generation? The new technology which disables the high-tech cell telephone and garage-door opener triggers favored by the insurgents, which has caused them to go to rope and wire triggers.

Among the other improvements is the purchase of 2,000 heavily armored vehicles which were more maneuverable than the 20 already there. The new vehicles cost $1 million each for a total of $2 billion dollars! It would be funny if it were not so incomparably tragic. Four troopers were killed by an IED this month in Iraq—a small number, but think of the individuals who knew and loved them—parents, wives, sweethearts, children, friends.

Another thing I always wonder about is, if 90 percent of the world’s helium’s fixin’s can get out of Afghanistan, and we certainly don’t need the fixes, what’s the point of going to war then, if we know what’s going on? In Afghanistan we are on a war footing, we might straighten the place out.

HR676 Will Free Americans of Their Health Care Misery

More Hate Mail & Rants to page five